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ABSTRACT

This book explores the many visually oriented activities that can be used to teach the composition process. Chapter one outlines the format of the book and discusses the composition process in terms of visual perception and reaction to visual stimuli. Chapter two introduces the general aspects of composition that are pertinent to all types of written composition. Chapter three discusses the aspects of literary composition that result in either a narration or a piece of personal/creative writing. Chapter four discusses exposition and those aspects of writing that will help a student explain an idea or analyze a process. Class activities that use visual materials are suggested for each of these writing categories. The final chapter discusses meaningful grading procedures. An appendix provides production hints for slides, filmstrips, "visual pillows," overhead transparencies, roller movies, string paintings, and magnetic or flannel boards. (RL)

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Composition: A Media Approach

by
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Contents

Chapter 1 The Process 7

Chapter 2 General Aspects 14

Chapter 3 Narration 32

Chapter 4 Exposition 62

Chapter 5 Grading 82

Appendix: Production Hints 86

Bibliography 95

CHAPTER 1

The Process

What Is Composition? Although it has been defined many different ways, composition is basically the putting together of thoughts or feelings in an intentional order to convey a message to an audience. Originating from the Old French word "composer," with "com" meaning "together" and "poser" meaning "to place," composition is the placing of ideas next to each other. These ideas are without media. They take form after they originate in the mind of the sender. This form may be print, as in written composition; sound, as in musical or verbal composition; or visual, as in visual composition. The important factor is not the medium, but the idea which one wishes to communicate. The effectiveness of the communication is not solely dependent on the medium itself, but rather on how well the sender uses a particular medium to put ideas together. In teaching, the concentration is on the use of the medium, usually print, and on how the student synthesizes ideas in an intentional order to communicate them to someone else.

Without meaningful communication with each other, we live in total isolation, unable to transfer knowledge from one to another and, perhaps more importantly, unable to tell others how we feel. Consequently, this act of composing is vitally important to all, not just the college-bound student or the scholars. It is the ability to convey complex thoughts and emotions to others that differentiates man from other animals. This ability is also a need, a drive. When it is thwarted, the individual becomes frustrated and seeks other means

to communicate. Often these alternate ways are socially and personally destructive, taking the form of striking against the agent of frustration, the institution or individual, who puts a person into the position of non-communication. This is often seen in schools as unsuccessful students are often academically frustrated, demonstrating their hostility either externally through disruptive actions or internally through withdrawal and passivity. School can be a primary agent of this frustration because it demands constant communication from students, but allows very little freedom in choice of media for the student to use in communication attempts. Usually, the only medium considered worthy in academic situations is print. If a student cannot compose print meaningfully, he or she is unable to demonstrate understandings of the subject matter or to share feelings with teachers. The result is frustration.

The major goal of teaching composition should be to help students overcome this frustration. As teachers we can show students how to compose their thoughts so that they are able to demonstrate their understandings to others. Since we exist in an academic society which values written composition above others, we also have the realistic obligation of helping students transfer their composing ability from whatever medium they are successful with to print.

It is a mistake to assume that because students are unsuccessful in school they are unable to compose. They can. Indeed, they do so all the time — outside of the classroom. The teacher's task is that of showing students that they can also communicate inside the classroom. Consequently, the teacher's responsibility is multifold. The students have to gain some confidence in their own abilities and know that they can be successful in the classroom. Then the teacher has to relate this success to other media, especially print. In short, the teacher has to deal with composition as a process first, and then apply it to a particular medium. By dealing with the process of composition rather than just the product, the teacher can use any medium for instructional purposes to illustrate how ideas can be synthesized for effective communication.

What Is the Composition Process? In general, we go through various steps when we compose. First, we have something we want to communicate to someone else, our reaction to some stimulus. In

school this step is usually artificial in that it is imposed from without by the teacher. Ideally, this should not be so, but we do live in a society in which we often have to express ourselves on a topic on demand, especially in school. Thus, the first step in teaching composition is to show students how to explore a given topic for related ideas, to help students put their thoughts and feelings into words. Second, we experiment. We try a tentative composition to see what it looks like. At this point we are writing for our eyes only. This has to be done in a very nonthreatening way. It is difficult enough to put our thoughts together the first time without the threat of evaluation imposed on top of that. Third, we clarify what we have composed in a rough draft. During this stage we edit, deleting some statements, adding others, clarifying many. At this stage we are writing for someone other than ourselves. In many instances, this is the last step. However, in school, where one is just learning the process, there should be some additional steps to complete the instructional program. We should share our composition with a sample audience. Too often in school the student is isolated from the audience and is unaware of not communicating clearly. During this stage, the student should test the effect of the composition on an audience, perhaps the teacher, or even better, peers. Consequently, the student knows exactly where the communication broke down. Then, we revise again, this time on the basis of what we learned from the sample sharing. We try to clarify those places where the composition failed to communicate what we intended. Sixth, we submit the composition for final evaluation. In school this final evaluation is usually the teacher; in life it is the entire audience for which the composition was intended. The difference between this step and the sharing with the sample audience is that at this point the composition stands by itself; the composer cannot intervene to clarify and interpret for the audience. By this time the student should be confident that the composition alone will succeed in demonstrating thoughts and feelings. It should be noted that throughout these steps no reference was made directly to print. This process surpasses any particular medium. On this assumption, the following ideas focus on relating visual composition to written composition.

Why Use Visuals To Teach Composition? First, students are very familiar with visual media. Not only have they spent much of their waking life in front of television, but they are constantly bombarded by visual messages outside of school. However, school provides an artificial world in that there is relatively little visual stimulus and an overabundance of print. This is fine for those students who do well in such an atmosphere, but it is devastating for those who see themselves partially or completely alienated from this print world. These students, on the other hand, often react favorably to visuals. After initial hesitation, usually caused by their prior frustrations with print, these students relate well to visual stimuli because they have had many successful experiences with them in the past. The teacher's task at this point is to allow the students' confidence from experiences outside the school to come forth inside the classroom.

Second, visuals give the class a common experience to which all the students can react. Class discussions are usually based on some experience the teacher assumes all the students have had. Often this experience is a reading assignment or, in composition, a sample written work or series of written exercises. However, those students who will not or cannot relate to print have not participated in this experience. Consequently, they are unable to share in the class discussion of the concept and "fail" again. The use of visuals as the common experience helps overcome this problem since nearly all of the students can relate to this medium. They are able to do so both because of their familiarity with it and because it is less abstract than print. They can immediately see the concept under discussion and do not have to translate from print to visual or deal with the concept on a purely print level. Since the goal of the instruction is understanding of the concept, removal of as many barriers between the concept and the student is vital. Once the composing technique is understood, then the teacher can help the student work with it in other media, especially print, constantly showing the relationships among the media.

What Is the Relationship Between Visual and Written Composition? When we use visuals to teach concepts such as organization in composition, we eventually ask students to transfer their understanding of the process in one medium, visual, to application in another medium,

print. If such a transfer is possible, let alone productive as a means of instruction, the processes must be essentially the same in both media. It may be beneficial to draw direct parallels between visual and verbal composition to illustrate the relationship. Both a single word and a single picture are ambiguous; either taken in isolation may have a variety of meanings to an audience. "Freedom," for example, holds one meaning for a prisoner and another for a college professor. While the first may want to escape from the prison walls and have the right to walk down a street, the other may see "freedom" as the right to publish what one wishes and teach as one sees fit. Similarly, the picture of a bird may also be interpreted differently by these two individuals. The prisoner may see the bird as a symbol of freedom while the professor may see it as an object of study.

To reduce the ambiguity the composer puts the word or picture in context with other words or pictures, thereby imposing limits on the range of possible interpretations. This step involves first exploring the range of possible words or pictures that go with the specific one. Once the appropriate context is selected, the composer has to arrange it so that it communicates what is intended. In short, the composer goes through the composing process with either the word or the picture in order to give it real meaning to an audience. "Freedom" may result in a brief statement for academic privilege, while the picture of the bird may be part of a visual of an eagle soaring high above and beyond the towers of a prison wall. Both take on meaning because of the total composition; the composer in both instances works through the same process of selection of an idea, experimentation, clarification, re-composition, and delivery to an audience. In both instances, someone has put ideas together to communicate an idea or a feeling to an audience.

Overview of Format

One of the major issues in the teaching of written composition revolves around the question of whether one should teach various types of writing, such as narration, exposition, analysis, etc., or present the student with different kinds of topics which call for the various types of writing. The disadvantage with the first approach is

that it tends to break the composition process down artificially; it focuses too much on the type of writing involved and not enough on the overall process of writing. By emphasizing the type of writing, the teacher is tempted to isolate the different modes when, in fact, there is considerable overlap among them. However, by relying solely on the topic to dictate the type of writing called for, the teacher often makes the tragic assumption that students can recognize naturally what is required in a composition situation. This is especially evident when we ask students to analyze a piece of literature. Usually, when we ask this question, we expect the students to give us a brief plot summary, character analysis, indication of the plot structure (e.g., exposition, mounting conflict, climax, denouement), statement of the theme, and an indication of how the author uses the language to bring out the various elements. We often find in the students' work a narrative recapitulation of the story. While we ask for an analytical essay, we receive a narration. Why? One reason may be that the student is unable to pick out the various analytical elements. If this is the case, however, all of the preceding classes explaining and discussing these elements have been wasted. A more plausible reason may be that the student just does not know how to write an analytical essay. He does not know what questions to deal with or how to state them in written form.

In this book I attempt to reach a middle ground by dealing with the teaching of written composition under three categories:

> General (those aspects which are pertinent to all writing)
>
> Narration (those aspects which result in either a narration or a piece of personal/creative writing)
>
> Exposition (those aspects which help a writer explain an idea or analyze a process).

In doing this I have expanded two modes of writing, narration and exposition, to include other types where there is considerable overlap in composition techniques. Under each of these three areas — general, narration, and exposition — I have attempted to describe various visually-oriented activities as they fit in with the composition process called for by the various types of writing. I have sug-

gested several activities to help students develop specific skills and then suggested application of these skills in a complete composition before moving to another set of skills. This continually allows the student opportunities to apply the skills in full products rather than seeing them just as isolated exercises. In doing this, however, I am not presenting the teacher with a fully developed composition course. Rather, I am attempting to explore the composition processes involved and present some classroom activities which the teacher may use to help his or her students become more aware of the processes. It is left up to the teacher to develop the course; but I hope these suggestions and explorations help with this development. In the last section of the book I pose a few suggestions about grading students' efforts in composition. I feel these comments are important as they separate grading from instruction. If a student is graded directly on the exercises used for instructional purposes, the student will usually not take a risk and try new ideas or methods of expression. Rather, the student will be tempted to stay with the old, the familiar ways of stating ideas. However, as teachers of composition, we want students to feel free to experiment with style and ideas. Consequently, we should separate evaluation from instruction, as suggested in the last section.

The following activities are suggested to demonstrate how teachers may explore the composition process with their students. The activities are a myriad of ideas to help them show students how to compose their thoughts and communicate them to others. I have sequenced the activities so that they follow the composing process involved under three categories: general, narration, exposition. Some of the activities are designed for full class work; others for small groups; and others for individual efforts. Some activities are meant for short work efforts over several days; others for full periods of concentrated work. All are meant to be adapted by the individual teacher to fit his or her own concept of the composition process and his or her own classes.

However, after students have worked with a particular skill, the teacher should have them use that skill in a complete composition following the steps outlined earlier: reaction to stimulus, experimentation, writing a rough draft, sharing, revising, and submitting.

CHAPTER 2

General Aspects

The composition process involves several steps: perceiving an idea, reacting to that idea, categorizing thoughts about the idea, putting these thoughts into a sequence, and finally describing these thoughts to an audience. In this chapter, we will explore each of these steps in terms of what they might require of the composer and how the teacher might organize some experiences for the student to concentrate on the various steps. Because these steps also pertain to both narration and exposition, they may be treated again under those headings.

Perceiving the Stimulus

Many theoretical dissertations and books have been written on this complex topic of how we perceive the world, and what forces mold our perceptions of both physical realities, such as events and scenes, and intangible states, such as personalities of other people. First, there is no such thing as objective perception. We cannot view the world as separate from ourselves. Each one of us sees the world in a unique way, both physiologically and psychologically. Our brains do not register everything that hits the retina of our eyes. The mind selects only those things which hold some meaning for us and neglects those which are either unimportant at the present time or which are completely alien to past experiences. Unless a conscious effort is made to itemize everything in a room, a person probably perceives very little of what is actually there. Try it. Close your eyes

and list everything you saw in a section of the room. Then take a good look around and itemize everything you see. Those items which you did not notice before were there, did strike your retina, but you did not perceive them. One of the first efforts in teaching composition should be to show students the individuality of their perceptions and help them become more aware of the world around them.

> At the beginning of class have the students go to the windows and silently look out. After about two minutes (any longer and they start getting giddy), ask them to go back to their seats. Now have them list everything they saw out the window (without taking extra looks). After they have done this (about five minutes), place them in small groups and have them compare lists. Have each group report back to the class after about ten minutes, describing the differences they found between the various lists. After these reports, you might ask why the differences exist even though everyone was viewing the same scene at the same time.

As a variation to this activity you might have students test and compare their perceptions of the details in a picture.

> Quickly flash a slide on the screen (about two seconds). Ask each student to list everything he saw in the slide. After they have finished this list, ask them to draw a line under the last word in the list. Flash the slide on the screen again. Repeat the listing of what the students saw. Do this several times, then leave the slide on the screen and go over the list. First, have students compare their lists with the slide, checking for errors and omissions. They should make note of but should not change their original lists. Divide the class into small groups, about three to five in a group. Have the students compare their lists with each other, checking for differences, perhaps at different times the slide was flashed. Finally, have the students discuss some possible reasons for the discrepancies among their lists, such as different interests, different locations in the room, etc. This exercise could be repeated again if you wish to help students improve their perceptions. As they practice, they should become more adept at quickly locating details in the slides.

Our perceptions depend on our previous experiences, our present needs, and our future interests and goals. We perceive those

things with which we are already partly familiar. In order for our minds to absorb a percept, there has to be some mental context or "set" into which this percept can fit. If we do not have this set, the percept is lost. In short, we have to be looking for what we see. We must have had some prior experience with the item or a similar item for it to register. In addition, if we are going to maintain the percept, or item, in our conscious minds, it has to hold some relation to our current and future needs. It has to be meaningful. When I read a sports page, for example, I do not remember the statistics of the individual players, but only the team scores and the key events of the games discussed. The individual records hold little interest for me. On the other hand, my brother-in-law has a great interest in these statistics and remembers them indefinitely. We both perceived the same data but because of our different interests we remember different aspects of that data. When a teacher walks into a room, he or she might notice conditions such as the amount of board space available, chalk in the chalk tray, the presence of a screen, shades on the windows, any machinery which might be there, the mobility of the desks. On the other hand, when a student walks into the same room, he or she might take note only of where the students' desks are in relation to the door and the teacher's desk. All see the same room, but each perceives it differently, depending on individual interests.

> Assign different students different roles — some may be teachers; others, principals. Tell each student to examine the room from the point of view of the assigned role. After two or three minutes of looking, have the students sit and list what they saw. Once the lists are completed, ask the students to get into small groups, one representative of each role being present in each group. The small groups should compare the various lists and discuss reasons for any differences.

Perception is influenced both by our internal state and by the environment surrounding the object perceived. When we view a three-foot object next to a one-foot object, the first object will look large. However, if we place that same object next to a twenty-foot object, it will probably look small. The object has not changed, only its environment. The same is true in even more abstract instances. Something that may be humorous in one situation, such as tripping

over a chair, may be tragic in another. This is also an important concept for students to learn as it presents another major influence on the way we perceive the world. In addition to situations which may be funny or tragic, depending on circumstances, those instances which have meaning in themselves, such as a photograph, can take on a different meaning when placed in different environments, even when supposedly separated from those other environments.

> This activity requires the use of about three to five still pictures of different people in different situations, such as an old woman, young couple talking quietly, men at war, young child frolicking in a field, and a reflective young woman. Hold all but the picture of the reflective young girl in your right hand. In your left hand hold the picture of the girl. Divide the class into small groups of three to five each. Moving from group to group show the members of each group two pictures, the picture of the girl in your left hand and one of the other pictures in your right hand. As you display the pictures for one group hold them so the other groups cannot see them. As you move from one group to another, change the picture in your right hand but keep the picture of the girl in your left. By the end of the showing, each group should have seen the picture of the reflective girl in your left hand and one of the other pictures in your right hand. As you show the pictures, ask each group to list a number of words or phrases to describe the girl in your left hand (e.g., *What is she like? What is she thinking? How does she feel?*). After each group has done this, ask each group to write its phrases on the board. Many of the phrases from any one group will probably be different from those of the other groups. Ask groups to explain why they chose these phrases and compare the reasons cited. Many of the choices and the reasons will reflect the influence of the pictures in your right hand even though the groups were asked to describe just the girl. Follow this exercise by asking the class for other examples of how their perceptions are influenced by the environment in which they see the object.

These activities focus on the exploration of what perception is and on how uniquely each of us views the world. There is, however, overlap in our perceptions. Otherwise we would never be able to share experiences with others. Students should realize this as well. It is also important at this time to begin to stress awareness of sensory experiences. In this regard the teacher should concentrate on having

students explore their perceptions with all of their senses, including smell, hearing, taste, touch, as well as sight.

Use "smellies" to heighten students' awareness of their sense of smell. Take several opaque jars with lids (35mm film cans work well for this) and put things like cinnamon, cloves, vapor rub, etc. inside and cover. Ask for volunteers to participate in the smelling experiment (four should be enough in the beginning; others will come later). Have each volunteer in turn smell the contents of the jar with eyes closed, trying not to identify it so much as trying to imagine what it smells like. Ask questions such as: *What does this smell remind you of? What can you remember about the first time you ever smelled it? How do you feel about this smell? Does it make you feel comfortable? Secure? Tense? Nauseous?* Repeat this with other volunteers and then with other smells. The effort is to have the students relate the sensation of smelling to their imagery of previous experiences and feelings. This kind of activity can be conducted with other sensory items as well ("feelies," tastes, sounds, etc.).

After students begin to use their senses more fully in perceiving what is going on around them and after they begin to understand individuality of perception, the teacher should move on to having the students look for details in what they perceive. In perception we first recognize something because it fits a general concept we already have in our minds. The next step is to use the specific percepts to modify and expand the general concepts. To do this we have to take careful note of the details of the specific things so that we use these details to broaden our perceptual experience.

Using the overhead projector helps students pick out general characteristics of objects and then move to more specific descriptions. Place simple two-dimensional objects like keys, paper clips, scissors, etc., on the overhead projector and show on the screen. Have students identify and describe the various objects. Move from these easily discernible items to more difficult ones which will require a good deal of imagination to identify. These latter objects should be more three-dimensional, such as balls, eyeglasses, etc. Again, have students identify and describe what they think they see on the screen.

Once students are comfortable using their senses to perceive and describe "real" objects, the teacher could move to using senses to

pick out detail in "representative" items. When we view the world directly, like looking out the window or smelling a roast cooking in the oven, the individual senses are struck directly. However, when we look at a picture only our sight is used directly. Yet, the appeal of many pictures is not only to our vision; they also hold appeal for our senses of touch, taste, hearing, and feeling as well. For example, when looking at a good photograph of a running brook, one can almost "hear" the rushing water or "taste" the fresh, clean coolness. In these cases our senses are used indirectly and in relation to the details we can discern with our eyes. We have to "imagine" the other senses. This act of imagining sensory perceptions is not confined to the viewing of pictures, but it is always active, stimulated by many different senses. For example, sometimes we will smell something and then envision what it looks like. As students become adept at primary or direct perception, they should be guided in using their imaginations to more fully perceive things which strike only one sense directly.

> Display a picture which has appeal for more than one sense. Pictures of bells ringing, pies cooking, waterfalls, crowds screaming, etc. should help with this. As students examine this picture, ask them to list the sounds they "hear," the things they "smell" or "feel," and what they can "taste." After they have finished their lists, discuss the various senses imagined, concentrating on one sense at a time. At this point you might also ask students to cite details from the picture which heighten their sensory perceptions other than sight.

Thus far, the students have been developing their abilities to receive impressions from their environments, both directly and indirectly. In addition, they have been discussing some of the processes involved in this perception. Now it is time for them to begin communicating their perceptions to others, to brainstorm about their sensations.

Reacting to Stimulus

Often we omit these steps in the composing process because we take it for granted that students can go through them easily. These

are stages that many writers go through almost automatically. Once presented with a topic, what does the composer do with it? He or she explores it, taking it and looking at it from many different angles until something can be said about it. The more narrowly the topic is defined in the beginning, the less room for variation. Most composition topics, however, are very broad. In fact, sometimes the very broadness presents problems for many students. The parameters are too wide. What can one say about a topic as broad as "Love"? Usually, the teacher believes the student is receiving a favor when a general topic is assigned in which there is a good deal of room for individual interpretation. This is true only when the student knows how to attack such a topic. Before we can be sure students have this knowledge, we should take them through the steps involved — brainstorming, categorizing, and stating the main idea.

Brainstorming. The first move in the attack is to let one's imagination roam, to brainstorm. Given a topic, one has to free-associate, considering every possibility that comes to mind. This may sound obvious to most, but many students attack a problem in just the opposite manner. Given the topic, they immediately try to find the one aspect they will use as the basis for their composition. They may not know how to brainstorm; they may be unwilling to take the time for it; or they are not given sufficient time for brainstorming.

> Show a picture to the class. Ask the students to call out any ideas that come to mind without worrying about how they might follow those ideas or about how absurd those ideas may sound. As the students call out their ideas, list them on the board or on an overhead projector.

Categorizing. After exploring the many ways a topic may be viewed, one must edit those thoughts. At this point the student makes various decisions as to which ideas to keep for further consideration; those to drop; and those which may be redundant or subordinate to others.

> Once the students have nearly exhausted their ideas in the previous activity, stop them and ask which of the ideas listed might go together and which might be dropped from the list. At this point you might find some items more general than others, so you can list a few under one or two of the more all-

encompassing ones. Throughout this activity and at its conclusion explain the process so the students are made explicitly aware of how to go about brainstorming a topic and categorizing their ideas for further development.

In addition to being able to explore the ideas a single stimulus might bring forth, it is also important for students to learn how to draw relationships among various stimuli and then brainstorm from these relationships. Not only are students often required to draw relationships among various ideas in school, such as between a character's actions in a novel and the theme of the novel, but they also do this continually outside of school, such as determining personality from what they see a person doing. The ability to draw relationships is even more important in terms of the student's total reaction to school. For learning to be meaningful, the student has to see the relationships between what is learned in the classroom and life in the world outside.

Bring in three different objects, such as an old shoe, a hat, and an umbrella. Ask your students what the relationship among these three objects might be. List the students' ideas on the board or an overhead projector as they come forth. After the ideas begin to dwindle, ask the class to describe each article in detail including the various functions of the articles. After they do this, ask the students if they have any more suggestions about the relationship among the articles. (Sometimes after describing the component details the students will see more areas the objects have in common.) Again, explain how the students drew relationships among the objects and brainstormed for ideas.

Stating the Main Idea. So far we have been concentrating on exploring topics, categorizing ideas, and searching out relationships among stimuli. Once the students are able to do this, they are ready to move to the next step: expressing the main idea of a series of related thoughts. They have had practice with this in the previous activities, but they have not dealt with the problem of actually stating the main idea. Rather, they have merely categorized ideas and noted that some were subordinate to others. In this step, the task is one of taking several ideas, finding the relationships among them, and stating the idea which holds them all together.

Glue four or five pictures that deal with a specific idea (such as sports) on part of a large piece of construction paper. A good deal of room should be left over after these pictures have been mounted. Have the class discuss the relationships among these pictures and come up with a topic which would include all the pictures on the poster. After students have arrived at a topic, give them magazines they can cut up. Ask them to find other pictures which deal with the same topic, cut them out, and glue them on the poster.

In this exercise the teacher presents the pictures and makes sure there is a fairly obvious topic under which they might all fall. The next step is to have the students go through the entire process of locating the main idea.

Gather a large number of small still pictures, about ten per group of students. Divide the class into small groups, about three to five per group. Ask the students to select from the group pictures those which they feel belong together. After they make their selection, circulate among the groups and ask each group why it selected those particular pictures and what the pictures have in common. The main value of this activity comes from the discussion among the students about which pictures belong and which do not.

An alternate or follow-up activity could involve the construction of an informal collage.

Bring in some magazines which the students can cut up. Ask them to cut out pictures which are related and paste them on a piece of construction paper, making an informal collage. Once the collage is completed, ask the students to assign titles to their collages and explain the relationship between the title and the component pictures. Depending on the class, this explanation might be more effective if made to each other in pairs or to the teacher privately, rather than in front of the entire class.

The final step in this stage of the composing process is to bring it all to bear on a culminating activity. This activity should require the students to go through the entire process to date: perceiving the details in a specific stimulus, exploring the possible ideas, putting the related ideas under a unifying theme, writing a rough draft, sharing the work with others, revising the composition, and, finally,

submitting it to the teacher. In this way the student is applying the skills in a complete product.

Sequence

Composition textbooks often deal extensively with this step in the composing process. However, most of these texts presume that the students already realize the importance of sequencing and that they are ready to perform it with sentences. The exercises are usually carried out individually and often involve putting scrambled sentences into correct order. Not only does this assume that the students are ready to manipulate verbal statements, but also that there is a correct way to order the sentences. In composing ideas, the act of sequencing comes from within the composer, not from outside. By teaching students that there is a "correct" order for statements, we may be shortcircuiting the composition process. Part of the sequencing act involves turning the ideas around inside one's mind and seeing the relationships from within. When students are presented with statements that can be sequenced in only one way, the order is being imposed from without.

In order to help overcome this imposition of "correctness" from some outside agent, it is advisable to let the student's sequence of ideas stand for itself, especially in the early stages of working with this concept. In other words, after the student has manipulated pictures or objects into a specific order, do not force the student to defend the statement verbally. In fact, for many students it is probably best not to force them even to translate this statement into verbal statements immediately. Let them feel success and security with their own performance before putting them into the more difficult position of verbalizing these ideas. Obviously, this advice is more appropriate for the more nonverbal students. Many others will probably wish to tell their sequences to either their friends or to the teacher. In this regard, it is often easier for the student to make the transition from a manipulation of ideas to verbalization of these ideas by telling friends first, and then presenting them to the teacher or the entire class. This is usually a more natural and less threatening move for the student than immediately being required to prove oneself in front of the entire class.

As stated earlier, one of the most important steps in teaching composition is that of discussing the concept under consideration. The students should be aware of the importance of intentionally ordering their ideas in their communications to others. They should realize that the meaning of the message depends on the sequence of the ideas involved. Not only does the presence or absence of meaning hinge on sequence, but also the meaning itself can be changed by altering the sequence.

> Take a small number of slides (about six) that tell a short story (e.g., two boys fighting over a ball with one winning and the other losing in the end) and show them to the class in order. First, ask the class to just look at the slides and see if there is any story there. Then, show the slides again, asking the students to tell the story picture by picture. Now change the order of the slides and ask the class to tell you the story again. They may still come up with a story, but it obviously will not be the same one. Discuss the reasons for the differences between the two stories, stressing the point that the ideas were exactly the same; only the order of presentation was different.

An exercise like this one helps students see the need for paying attention to the ways they put their ideas together. When seeing it visually, it is more difficult for them to say, "Well, that's what I meant," than with print because the difference is more obvious. When putting their ideas down in print, they sometimes have a general visualization of what the verbal statements represent. Two or three verbal statements may represent the same visual idea. Since the sentences represent the same thing, the order of the statements may become unimportant to the writer. However, when confronted with the visual statements themselves, there is less overlap of ideas and, consequently, the importance of the order becomes more apparent.

Once students have discussed the role sequence plays in the composing process, they should be asked to practice sequencing ideas. As in other steps, I suggest beginning with visual activities and then working toward verbal ones.

> Take a series of small pictures and have students put them into sequence. Tell the students that after they sequence them,

the pictures should either tell a story or explain a process, depending on the pictures used. In lower grades begin with pictures which have an obvious relationship and work towards pictures that are independent statements in themselves and have little surface connection with each other. If the pictures are too obviously related, however, there will be a tendency for the students to look for the "correct" way to sequence the ideas. The pictures should have some overall theme in common, but there should also be a wide variety of ways they can be ordered.

One of the major difficulties students have with sequencing pictures is verbalizing the connections between the pictures. Often students tend to describe just the individual pictures rather than compose a continuous narration or exposition. When the students are ready to discuss what they have manipulated, it is often easier to begin with having the students just tell what the pictures say. However, then be sure to ask what happened between the pictures. The teacher should ultimately focus on the space between the pictures nearly as much as on the pictures themselves.

Once students have had practice with manipulating and verbalizing visual narrations and expositions, you might wish to have them go through the process from the beginning. You can do this by having them actually take the pictures and then sequence the processed photographs. If your students do not have access to cameras, you could have them select and sequence pictures from magazines.

After students have sequenced and verbalized pictures, they might go through several other sequencing activities designed to demonstrate the practical necessity of sequencing. This will give them practice with the process as they complete the composition.

Have students draw a map of the way they would come to school if they had to walk. You may want to have a map of the area available to help them with this activity. In order to make it even more interesting, have them insert pictures or drawings of important places, such as the drug store on the corner at which they have to turn right. Once the map is completed, the students could make up a language experience story or write a narration using the map as the overall background. This kind of follow-up activity would be valuable in that it would also give students

practice sequencing events both chronologically and/or spatially, depending on the kinds of transitions they use. For example, if they indicate the events by "first, second, and third," they sequence chronologically. On the other hand, if they use transitions such as "farther down the street," they sequence spatially. Depending on the maturity of the students, it might be appropriate to discuss these distinctions with them. Finally, have the students develop a full composition, going through the process of rough draft, sharing, revision, and submitting.

Have the students make time-lines of their lives. Take white drawing paper (about 6" by 24") and tape several together so it can be folded several times at six-inch intervals. The result should look like a bellows. The title of the time-line, such as "My Life," and a picture or sketch of the student go in the first box. The second box could have a drawing or a picture representing the student's first year in this world (or in school, depending on the grade level); then the third, fourth, and so on until the spaces are completed. If they wish, students could use pictures from magazines to represent these different phases. They should leave room in each box to write something later or draw a picture representing respective periods of life. Then have each student compose an autobiography, completing the composing process.

In upper grades not all of the students need the extra work on sequencing. Yet, a good number do require some remedial work in this area. Since they probably have been exposed to the difficulty many times before, they should approach the problem from a different perspective. Perhaps they have to see the problem for themselves rather than have someone else point it out to them.

For this activity the student will need several still pictures, a tape recorder, and paper and pen. Have the student sequence the pictures so that they tell a story or explain a process and then record the story on tape. The student should now write the story. As the taped story is played back, have the student compare it both with the visual sequence and with the written version. Any differences between the tape recording and the written version should be marked. Throughout the playback session, have the student note differences among the different versions and decide on which are the better sequence of ideas. In this way many students are able to recognize the problem them-

selves and figure out the better approaches without the evaluation by the teacher. They work through the process visually, verbally, and in writing; and then review what they have done themselves.

Until now most of the instruction has concentrated on the skeleton of the composition. The thoughts have been gathered, edited, categorized, placed under general themes, and sequenced to convey the message to someone else. Now it is time to help students embellish these ideas with appropriate description.

DESCRIPTION

In any mode of composition in any medium, the final task is that of expanding and refining the skeleton to make it communicate the message as effectively as possible. For example, when making a print of a photograph, the composer crops or edits out extraneous material, highlights other aspects, and, in some cases even adds detail through techniques such as superimposure. The filmmaker begins with a story line, visually, verbally, or both, and then changes it continually in the development of the final composition. In written composition, the primary unit of communication is words. Consequently, the teacher's efforts might ultimately be directed toward facilitating the students' use of words to describe thoughts or impressions.

An essential part of this act, however, is the realization of the relationship between the words and that which they stand for, the image they represent. Too often teachers focus only on the words, as though they were entities in themselves. In doing so, the fact that words are representations of images, either pictures or processes, is overlooked. In order to help students see the function of words and the relationship between words and the concepts they represent, the focus of instruction should be on illustrating this relationship, rather than on learning words in isolation. The student should work back and forth from the concept or image to the words. The aim, therefore, is to help the students describe the thoughts, emotions, or images they envision. To achieve this aim the student has to work with both the image and the word.

Activities such as the following are designed to help students explore the relationship between words and images and, especially, to facilitate their use of words to explain their imaginings. As with other steps in the process, the activities are sequenced to allow for discussion of the composing act, move through a series of activities of increasing difficulty, and finally apply the principles involved to written composition.

Show a slide of a person or action on the screen and ask students to call out words or phrases, not sentences, which they feel describe it. As they call out these words, list them on the chalk board or on the overhead projector. You may have to prompt them with questions such as, *What kind of look is that? What do you think this person is like?* Once the students have finished calling out words, discuss the relationship between the words and the slide by asking questions such as, *In what way is he cute?* At the same time try to expand their vocabulary in relation to the slide by asking for other words that might describe the slide better, asking questions such as, *Can you think of another word for cute?* You may want to use a thesaurus or dictionary for this. The attempt is not to arrive at the "correct" description, but rather to explore the many words one can use to describe the image. You should use more than one slide as some will be more motivating than others. Also, the more they practice with it, the more valuable and productive the exercise.

The previous activity stresses the group discussion of the relationship between words and images. This kind of discussion is necessary to help students learn from each other and to explore the process in a nonthreatening way. During these discussions the class tone should be one of sharing ideas rather than "seeing what you know." The following activity is meant for more individual work and may be used as an "in passing activity," one which students can do when they have some free time and would like to try. Since the value of such an activity comes from discussion about the words and pictures, it is probably best if the students work in pairs or small groups.

Use a flannel board or magnetic paper (see Appendix) to make a description chart. On the left side of the chart place descriptive pictures (e.g., pretty girl, messy room, athlete, etc.). On the other side of the chart, or in a box underneath, place

several descriptive words that can be attached to the chart. Have the students work in pairs or small groups to select appropriate words for the pictures and place these words next to the specific pictures. By using the flannel board or magnetic paper, the pictures can be changed frequently and the vocabulary list increased steadily.

These activities are geared to associating specific words with images. The next step is to put the specific words into context in an effort to describe an image to someone else.

For this activity you will need three similar but slightly different slides, a slide projector, and a screen. Have one student stand with back to the screen while the rest of the class views one of the three slides and tries to describe the slide as accurately as possible. It is important that no one except you has seen the other two slides. After the class has described the slide on the screen to the student, turn the projector off and have the student turn around. Now mix this slide in with the other two. Ask the student whose back was turned to select the slide which the class described from the three slides as you show them on the screen. If he or she is unable to pick it out, discuss how the class might have described the picture more accurately and repeat the exercise with three more slides. You could extend this activity by having students bring in pictures and lead the activity themselves.

With these activities the teacher not only helps students develop their description skills, but also provides opportunities to increase powers of perception and develop abilities to select relevant details from images. The next type of activity involves having the students describe a more abstract image to an audience.

Have one student leave the room. While gone, have another student draw an object on the chalk board or on the overhead projector. Have the student return to the room but not look at the object drawn. The returning student should sit at a desk with back to the object and be prepared to draw the object on a piece of paper. Now, have the class describe the object to the student, who will replicate it while the class is explaining it. Compare this drawing with the original. If there are major discrepancies between the two drawings, discuss how the class might have helped with their descriptions. Repeat this exercise several

times, perhaps with increasingly complicated objects. You might also vary it by having the returning student draw the object on the board with the class describing the process of creating the object rather than the outline.

Thus far in this step, we have had students work with individual words and with putting words in context to describe images. Now the students should translate the visual and the verbal to print.

Have the students select a picture and write a description of that picture. Place all the pictures in a pile and have the students trade compositions. Now, have the class try to match the appropriate pictures with the compositions. Once the matching is completed, either by those with the compositions if the description was effective or by the original writer if it was not, have the students work in pairs to discuss how the written composition might be altered to more accurately or vividly describe the picture.

As a follow-up exercise to the description of the object, have each student draw an object and then describe it in writing on a separate piece of paper. Put all the drawings in a pile (unnamed, of course) and have the students trade compositions. Now have the class match compositions and drawings. After the matchings, have students work in pairs to discuss how the compositions might be altered to more accurately describe the object.

This activity can be slightly changed to help with describing a process by having the students first draw the object and then explain in writing how someone else could draw the same object. Now have the students trade compositions and attempt to follow the directions and draw the object. Once the drawings are completed, have the students compare their drawings with the originals and discuss any discrepancies with the original composer.

The sequence of activities described in this chapter is not unilateral. One does not go straight through these steps without detours or regressions. In composing, one operates at many different levels or stages simultaneously and interchangeably. The activities have been presented sequentially here to help the student realize that there is a composing process and to help put the writing act into perspective. Too often the student sees the process as a series of

isolated exercises leading to a final grade. Consequently, the student should be asked periodically to write a complete composition, demonstrating that one skill does build on another in the effort to convey ideas and feelings to others.

In addition, students come to the class with a wide variety of experiences and abilities, and many of the steps described have already been internalized by some. However, it will not intellectually harm even these students to review the component steps, especially if the teacher gears the specific activity to their experiential and academic backgrounds. On the other hand, it might seriously affect students who have not internalized the process if it is taken for granted that they do understand it when, indeed, they do not.

One alternative to this problem of teaching concepts understood by some but not by others has been to separate the students into groups. This can be done, but I would suggest that the teacher do this within the class itself and only for the small group or individual work. One of the main objectives of the full class discussions is to have students of different experiential and academic backgrounds share their ideas with each other. If they are separated, not only does the class miss this sharing, but the system also imposes quality labels on the groups and the activities. In effect, it says that the best students work with print while the poor students work with visuals. This is wrong. The main goal of all of the activities in this text is to demonstrate that the composing process applies to many different media and that understanding the process in one medium is just as valuable as understanding it in another. The steps have culminated in written composition only because this is necessary for academic success since print is the major medium of communication in schools.

The next two chapters examine two common areas of composition: narration and exposition. Although many of the activities in those chapters are similar to some in this chapter, they are geared for more specific objectives. While the aim of this chapter is to help students explore the entire composing process, the following chapters help students compose for specific purposes in specific modes.

CHAPTER 3

Narration

For some reason many students are confused by the term, "narration." My brother-in-law, for example, was given an assignment in his college composition course to write a narration. Before he could even begin, he had to figure out what was meant by narration. His confusion is not unique. I believe it stems from a previous teacher making the process more complicated than it is. Teachers sometimes do this by placing too much emphasis on the terms and on elaborate definitions of these terms. The emphasis in these situations is on the term rather than on the process. On the other hand, the same confusion can result when there is no distinction made between different kinds of writing. Teachers, therefore, should indicate that there are different kinds of writing, such as narration and exposition, but they should avoid building a mystique around the terms, making them more esoteric and complicated than they really are.

Basically, a narration is a story and the aim of narrative writing is to tell a story. As in any composing process, the composer has to move through several steps in order to relate the story. While many students go through these steps intuitively, some do not even know where to begin. Since the initial steps, such as perception and brainstorming, have been dealt with previously, I will not dwell at length on specific activities for them but rather suggest that you review these sections with your students before beginning narrative composition.

In writing a narrative it is especially important throughout the process to be aware of sensory perceptions and one's emotional reactions to these perceptions. Consequently, you should probably have your students go through some of these exercises again, expanding their perceptions and exploring their feelings and memories about those perceptions. You might, for example, have the students do the "smellies" activity, but this time concentrate on the story behind the memory of the smell and the feelings it brings to mind. The goal is to stimulate the imagination, to recall an emotional state and the events surrounding that state.

From here you can concentrate on narration — the act of storytelling. As in the previous chapter, the focus in this one will be on the process involved in achieving the final product rather than on the product itself. By working with the process rather than just the product, we can again use a variety of media throughout the exploration.

Although many teachers use visuals when teaching narration, they do so only in a limited way. A teacher often uses visuals during the instruction of narrative composition only to stimulate writing. This very limited use overlooks the fact that pictures can also be composed to tell a story. If the teacher realizes that visuals, like words, can be composed into a narration, it seems logical that this medium can also be used to explore the process involved in composing a narration. For example, the teacher can use pictures to discuss plot development just as validly as words since narrations in both media contain a beginning, middle, and end. In short, I am suggesting that the teacher make a far more extensive use of the visual medium to help students learn how to compose a story. Instead of using pictures just to motivate writing the story, the teacher should also use visuals to actually teach the elements of the story.

At this point, however, I should note that although this text concentrates on a visual approach to examining the composing process, I am well aware that there are many other approaches to teaching composition. No single avenue or approach is complete in itself for all students. Whichever avenue a teacher chooses, it should be supplemented by others where appropriate. For example, when examining narrative techniques, such as character, it would also be

an excellent idea to read passages from literature to demonstrate how professional writers do it. I might add a word of caution, however. When exemplifying processes with illustrations from literature, the teacher may run the risk of discouraging some students who have very little confidence in their abilities when confronted with print. When illustrating processes, the teacher should be sure that examples are provided, not standards or norms by which the students should judge their own efforts. The task, then, is to bring as many examples of the narrative process together as possible so that each student will be able to understand at least one. It is important to remember that each student has a unique way of learning. Although there may be considerable overlap among some of the learning modes, no single method will be appropriate for all of the students all of the time.

This chapter explores the narrative process, beginning with seeing relationships among seemingly unrelated ideas; establishes a basic outline for the narration; and then builds upon that outline, expanding the base statements to relate the story in detail. Although not every aspect of narration is covered, the more essential narrative elements are discussed: plot, characterization, dialogue, and figurative language. At the end of the chapter, some additional exercises are included to stimulate narrative writing and to allow students to work on various component skills individually.

Seeing Relationships. In the film *Why Man Creates*, the speaker states that an essential part of the creative process is "looking at one thing and seeing another." In order to do this one has to be able to let the mind wander to explore possible relationships among a continual bombardment of different perceptions. Although this concept was discussed in the preceding chapter, I feel it is important enough to re-introduce here. Storytelling is more than just recounting a series of events. It is often creating a relationship between events or ideas where none previously existed. This is not a skill that comes naturally. It has to be developed and practiced.

> Take any two large still pictures. Ask the class to describe what is happening in each picture. This may also include a description of each picture. Now ask the students to make up a story using both pictures. This story should be composed by the

entire class verbally. The aim is just to give them practice in relating the two pictures. If they have difficulty drawing the relationship, you might have to go back to the descriptions of the specific elements and help them draw the connections. Repeat this activity with other pairs of pictures. A good follow-up to this would be to take one picture and have the class make up a story about something not in the picture.

The attempt here is to help the students first perceive connections and then verbalize what they perceive. To do this, the class atmosphere should be one of free exploration. Often, the wilder the relationship, the more effective the motivation. If the class has difficulty making up a full story, concentrate on one event, exploring the potential avenues it may take. After the class has begun to draw connections between two pictures, you are ready to move on to a slightly more involved activity.

Display a large number of unrelated photographs or pictures around the room or on the floor. Ask some students (preferably volunteers) to select pictures from the display. Each student should select one picture to tell a story about. Then ask the students to stand in the front of the room and tell a single story as a group, each using his or her own picture as the point of focus but following the story line from the preceding picture. In short, they will be telling one story with each picture providing some input to the total plot. But tell them not to finish the story. Before the story begins, tell the class that at the end of the group's story one additional person will be selected from the audience to choose one more picture to conclude the story.

If the story fails, discuss reasons why it failed. Failure usually occurs because the storytellers did not establish a setting, or initiate a conflict or because each storyteller merely described his or her own picture and did not relate it to the preceding one. After discussion, ask for other volunteers to go through the same procedure.

This activity actually accomplishes several goals at once. First, it helps set an informal tone in the classroom as all the students are free to say what they wish about their picture since there is no "correct" story. Once the initial self-consciousness of the students is overcome, the activity provides a source of pleasurable sharing and exploration. Second, this activity helps the students see and verbalize

relationships into a story context. Not only does this promote quick thinking and impromptu speaking; but it also develops other skills, such as listening for relevant details as well as main ideas and use of transitions to draw the connections between the preceding picture and the student's. Although these activities involve development of many skills and concepts, the main objectives are to enable the students to see relationships and, especially, to promote a class atmosphere of exploration and sharing of ideas.

Framework

Before discussing the various techniques and elements of narration, it is important that the students see the general framework of a narrative. This is necessary if they are to understand where all of the smaller components, such as setting, fit. The following activities demonstrate two methods of approaching narratives. The first concentrates on a single event and views it chronologically.

> Show the class a slide of some action (e.g., a fight). Ask the students to jot down words or phrases (not sentences) that reflect their thoughts about what might have happened ten minutes previous to this picture. Give them about five minutes to do this, then ask them to leave some space and draw a line to separate this list from the next. Then ask the students to jot down words or phrases that reflect their thoughts about what is happening in the picture now. Again, give them about five minutes and ask them to draw another line. Then ask the class to jot down words or phrases that reflect their thoughts about what might happen ten minutes after the picture was taken. Give them five minutes to do this, then an additional two or three minutes to add to the other lists. Once the students have had time to complete their lists, ask them to share what they have in each section with the class. After the sharing, discuss the procedure used to organize thoughts about the picture. That is, discuss this procedure as a possible way to approach a narrative topic chronologically.

In the first activity the student was asked to look at one event in terms of what happened before, during, and after. In the following activity the student is asked to look at three general story elements and describe various events in the short story bringing these

elements into focus. Although the sequencing of the events may be chronological, the emphasis is not on time, but rather on the story elements. While there are many terms that can be used to describe the plot structure of a story, the concept can be simply seen as events that take place as the main *character* attempts to overcome various *obstacles* in efforts to achieve some *goal*. While this oversimplification of plot structure may not be adequate for a fully developed narration, it does provide an adequate, easily understood skeleton for future exercises.

> On one page illustrate the main character, the goal, and the major obstacle to be overcome. Make a slide of this illustration. Now make slides of illustrations of the events that take place as the main character strives to achieve this goal. Show the first slide to the class and briefly discuss the role of each of the elements in the story. (For example, "In a short story there is usually a main character who is trying to achieve a certain goal. However, this goal is difficult to reach because of some obstacle in the way. The story revolves around the events that occur while the main character struggles to surpass the obstacles and win the goal.") After this brief introduction, show the slides representing the events, discussing each event with the class. Now have each student draw or locate pictures to represent the three elements for their own story (character, goal, and obstacle). Once they have illustrated these elements, have them discuss the story with friends. After the discussion, have each student list from seven to ten events in the main character's attempts to overcome the obstacle and achieve the goal. This will give each student a simple plot to use for future development.

The aim of these types of exercises is to have the student explore two approaches to composing a narration. The first activity involves looking at a single event and describing personal reactions to it chronologically. In the second activity the student looks at three simple elements of the story and describes the events that tie these elements together. Both activities provide a framework and general understanding of narration so that the student will have some context into which some of the more specific aspects of narrative composing can fit. These activities also give the student a way to approach a narrative topic.

Sequence

As in any composition once the composer has the basic idea for a story, the next task is that of putting the ideas in order. For some students this is difficult. These students often realize what they meant to say after someone has pointed out the confusion caused by the poor sequencing, but they seem unable to put the events in the order they want when they initially write the story. The following exercises are designed to lead these students through the entire sequencing process, moving from the sequencing of visuals, through verbalizing this sequence, and culminating in a writing activity. Although sequencing exercises are found in the preceding chapter, these exercises concentrate on sequencing events and are, therefore, especially appropriate for narrative writing. The first exercise involves working with a nonverbal story with an obvious order. The aim is to make the student aware of the concept of sequencing events by concentrating on that step in the process without worrying about any other factors at the same time.

> Make an overhead transparency of a cartoon strip, preferably nonverbal. Cut up this transparency so that each block of the strip is isolated from the rest. You may wish to use acetate pens to color the strip to provide interest but it is unnecessary for the learning of the skill. Randomly place the strip on an overhead projector and ask the class what the correct order should be. As they call out suggestions, move the individual blocks around until the order they dictate is shown on the screen. Now have the class tell the story. This activity could be supplemented by having individual students find or draw their own cartoons; transfer them to acetate; cut them up; and have other students sequence them and relate the story.

Initially, activities should involve class discussions of the concept. After the discussion the students should be encouraged to supplement their work through small group or individual efforts with similar activities. This gives students an opportunity to share ideas before working alone.

Another difficulty encountered by many students when working with visuals is that of transferring the concept from one medium to another. In the first sequencing activity, the students worked with

visuals and then transferred that sequence to a verbal medium as they told the sequence. The next type of exercise supplements this in that specific attention is paid to this process of translating a visual sequence to a verbal one and finally to a print sequence.

> Using a narrative filmstrip without captions, such as those accompanied by a record or tape, have the students tell the story as they watch the visual translation on the screen. After they have had an opportunity to tell the story as a class, have them work in small groups or individually and write captions for each of the frames. You might have to demonstrate the writing of captions with the first few frames of the strip and then have the class supply captions for the remaining ones.

Both of these activities involve working with a story that has already been determined by someone else. The goals of the activities are twofold. First, the students should realize that one of the steps in composing a narration is the sequencing of events. Second, the students should begin to see the relationship between visual, verbal, and print sequences — each being a translation of the preceding one. Following this the students should initiate the events themselves, visualize them, and then verbalize them to other students. In short, they should apply the narrative process as they have worked with it so far and then write a story, going through the various steps in the composing process.

> Have students collaborate on a story and draw or cut out pictures to illustrate it. They should mount these pictures so that they could be placed on a flannel or magnetic board (see Appendix). Give the students time to (a) make up the story together, jotting down the sequence of events; (b) discuss the pictures that should go along with the story; and (c) rehearse the presentation. The story should not be very complicated. It should have one basic setting and few characters. After the students have finished their preparation, have them present the story to the class. One student reads the story while the other manipulates the characters. If you do not have the materials for a flannel or magnetic board available or you feel your students would resent doing this activity, you could have them present the story as a series of still pictures instead of actually maneuvering the figures. The important part of this activity is that students work together to create and sequence a story and

then present a visual-verbal presentation of the events to the class.

An activity like this should help review narrative sequence for the class. However, there may be some students who will need reinforcement of this skill periodically. Consequently, it might be a good idea to have some activity which would allow students to review sequencing on their own whenever they or the teacher feels it is necessary.

> Set aside a section of the classroom to establish an interest center where the student who needs extra work on a skill can find an activity to help. Place several pictures randomly in a box at the interest center. Each picture should have a hole punched in the top. Also at the interest center place a board with 10 to 15 hooks and a tape recorder with tape (cassette would be the easiest). Whenever reinforcement on sequencing is needed, the student should select pictures from the box and place them on the hooks on the board. Then the student should verbalize the story into the tape recorder. The pictures and the tape should be left intact until someone else, such as the teacher or another student, has listened to the story. A variation of this would be to have the student write the events of the story after recording them and then compare the sequence of events as stated visually, verbally, and in writing.

Activities like those presented in this section should enable the student to construct the basic framework for a narration. Once able to do this, the student should be ready to develop the various components of the narration: the beginning, middle, and end.

Beginning, Middle and End.

Although no single method of ordering events fits all narrative situations, all narrations have a beginning, middle, and end. One way to introduce a general discussion on these parts of a narration is to discuss them in relation to a television drama, such as "The FBI" or the old "Perry Mason." The action which takes place just prior to the first commercial is the beginning. What functions are served by the beginning? First, it strives to convince the audience to sit through the first commercial and stay with the program. In short, its major

purpose is to interest its audience. Second, it introduces the major elements of the narrative, such as the main characters, the setting, and the situation or conflict. Third, it provides background for the rest of the story. When a student composes a narration, the beginning should accomplish the same ends.

Beginning. One consideration in beginning the narration is movement. How is the composer going to bring the major events into focus? The specific characters and their plight can be introduced immediately and then related to the world around them. Or the composer can begin with the overall environment and zero in on the individuals with whom the story is concerned. Should the story go from specific to general or from general to specific? Neither direction is always correct for every situation. The aim of the activities such as the one that follows should be to discuss the effect of movement on the audience and under what circumstances one direction is more appropriate than the other.

> Show several slides which demonstrate movement in a specific direction (e.g., a picture of a crowded beach, a family on that beach, two boys playing, and one of the two boys). Show them in one order and then the reverse. Ask the class which direction is more effective. There will probably be some disagreement. Do not try to arrive at the correct order, but rather discuss why one group prefers one direction and the rest the other. Try to gear the discussion toward the purpose of the author, such as telling one boy's story or telling a story about the whole family, with the boy as a point of focus. A good follow-up to this discussion would be to have the students find, draw, or take pictures and then sequence them, paying particular attention to movement. After students sequence the pictures, they could discuss the direction and effect they are trying to create.

During the discussions of these concepts, it is important that the teacher remember that although one direction may be preferred over another, there is no "right" answer. The direction depends on the effect the author is trying to create on the audience. The composer may, for example, be trying to surprise the audience by beginning with a very specific, private scene and then suddenly reveal that it is taking place in the middle of a crowd. The goal is to have the student

consider the alternatives and then make a choice rather than select one direction because he or she is unaware another exists.

While the movement or direction of events in the beginning brings the audience's attention to focus on the story, the setting accomplishes the second objective of the beginning by giving the audience the necessary background. Activities like the following should be arranged to introduce students to this concept through various learning stages: visual to verbal to print. The goal of each is to help the student realize the role setting plays in a narrative and to give practice establishing a setting.

> Make a large poster depicting a scene and display it in easy reach of the students. Gather a large number of small pictures (about 20) and place them randomly in a pile on a table near the poster. Have students select pictures they feel belong in the poster scene. Have them put these pictures on the poster with paper clips, tacks, or tape. Ask why these pictures were appropriate for this scene.
>
> A variation of this activity would be to have two posters, each representing a different scene, and then follow the same procedure. This would give the students a choice and your question might be why some pictures were more appropriate for scene A than scene B. In either case the discussion should revolve around the relationship between the small pictures and the scene.

Activities like the preceding should focus on physical setting and the kinds of activities or people that belong with that environment. Once the students have discussed the physical setting, it would be valuable to extend that discussion to include tone or mood fostered by that setting.

> Using a slide or large picture of a physical setting, such as a dark street, conduct a discussion on how the students would feel if they were placed there. Expand that discussion to include what events they think might take place. As follow-up to this discussion, students could draw, locate, or take pictures which they feel convey a definite tone. They could discuss this tone with other students in small groups.

After the students have discussed the idea of setting and the role it plays in the narrative, it is time for them to translate their visual

and verbal ideas into print. For many this is easy, but for some the transition has to be very obvious.

> Show a slide of a setting to the entire class. As the students examine the scene, have them call out words or phrases they would use to describe it. Write their comments on the chalk board or on an overhead transparency. Once they have finished calling out words or phrases, focus their attention on the list and have them choose those which they feel are most appropriate for this slide. You could place a limit on the number of phrases allowed in the final list, forcing them to be selective. If appropriate to this class, have them explain their choices. This activity could be enhanced by letting the students use dictionaries or thesauruses. One way to follow up this discussion would be to have students work in small groups to select a picture and list modifying words or phrases for it.

Activities like this help the student translate verbal ideas directly into specific words. Those like the following one are designed to have the student work with entire sentences and paragraphs. The aim at this stage is to show the student how to expand descriptions of the setting. At this point in the instruction of composition, some teachers feel it is necessary to take time out to discuss parts of speech, especially adjectives, adverbs, or modifiers. However, this is ineffective for many students, especially for those who need the knowledge most. Usually these students have been exposed to parts of speech for several years and still do not understand the terms and will probably be equally frustrated if confronted with them again. In addition, this kind of activity takes time away from the real job of using printed words to specify thoughts. It is the use of words that is important; not the labels one might hang on that particular use. In order to focus attention on the use itself, the teacher should work directly with how a composer can use modifiers to clarify and specify ideas.

> Show a slide of a setting to the entire class and ask students either to write or dictate a description of that setting. Once you have the descriptive paragraph, delete some of the modifiers and/or leave spaces where modifiers might be inserted. Put this paragraph on an overhead transparency and ask each student to write on a piece of paper words for the blank spaces. After

students have had an opportunity to do this, ask them to call out the words they wrote, blank by blank, and list them in the appropriate spaces on the transparency. Discuss the various words in terms of clarifying the description and making it more specific. After the discussion, show another slide and ask the students to write descriptive paragraphs of it, paying particular attention to words such as those used in the class discussion. When you read these paragraphs, indicate places (blanks) where the students could have inserted more words to clarify the setting.

As with sequencing, some students will need reinforcement on this skill. Activities like the following one are meant to be made available to the students throughout their work on beginning a narrative. This gives them an opportunity to experiment with the ideas on their own, without any obligation or pressure.

Using a flannel, magnetic, or bulletin board create a scene for the beginning of a story. On the board place a few pictures that describe a little of the setting (e.g., pictures of an office building). Near the board place a box of pictures or several magazines which the students can cut up, materials for hanging pictures on the board, and a tape recorder and tape. At their leisure the students should go to the area (perhaps an interest center) and find more pictures to hang on the setting. As they hang more pictures, they could record the description of their picture in relation to the entire setting. It would probably be best if they listened to the previous recording and began where the other left off. When the picture is complete, play back the tape to see how the setting has developed This board could be kept active throughout the discussions of narration, building toward a complete story which would eventually be visualized on the board and recorded on tape.

Middle. During the middle of a narration the composer builds the bulk of the story. On most one-hour television programs the middle occurs between the first and fourth commercials. During this time the hero has several fights with the villain, gets involved with the girl, makes a few statements about life in general, and seems doomed to failure. The same format applies to many other narrations as well. In this section it is important that the composer provide the audience with enough information so they can follow the sequence of events.

To help students with this step, the teacher could review some of the sequencing exercises, if necessary, and discuss various ways the events could be ordered. During these exercises, however, it is important to concentrate on the connections between events.

> Have a small group of students sequence approximately five slides into a story. Show the slides on the screen, relating the story as each slide appears. After the students have finished the story, go back over the story and concentrate on the space between the slides. List the transitions on the chalk board and discuss alternatives with the class. Depending on the class, you may wish to discuss the type of connection specific transitions make (e.g., "since" assumes a causal relationship between the events).

In addition to placing the events in order, the middle of a narration also explains or interprets the events for the audience. As in the beginning, careful selection of words is necessary to ensure the audience's understanding of what is going on in the story.

> Using a cartoon or an action picture as a motivator, create a language experience story with the class. As the class tells the story revolving around the cartoon or picture, write it down on the chalk board, newsprint, or on an overhead transparency. After the story is finished, read it over with the class. Now take a passage which illustrates an important event in the middle of the story and rewrite it, leaving blanks where you feel the story could be more descriptive or accurate. For example, the word "tripped" illustrates action better than "went" in the phrase "went into the room." Put this second transparency on the overhead and ask the students to fill in the blanks. As they call out words, list them in the blanks and then discuss which words are most appropriate and why. Fill in all the blanks and reread with the class. As in an earlier exercise, ask the students to write their own description of an event and go over it, concentrating on the words used or that could be used to clarify what is happening. Before they write this paragraph, however, it might be a good idea to review the types of words that portray action by listing them on the board as they are given by the class and expanded by you.

End. The end of a narration brings the events to a conclusion. In the television program this usually occurs just prior to and following

the fourth commercial. Just before the fourth commercial the hero defeats the adversary in a climactic event, bringing the main conflict to a close. But a few loose ends still hang and comments have to be made about the overall significance of the story. These questions are resolved just after the fourth commercial when the hero comes back to answer all the questions about the solution of the crime and to tell the audience that the villain never had a chance because criminal life is wrong. The endings of most narrations accomplish the same results. They bring the events to a conclusion, make a statement about the insights to be gained by the story, and leave the audience with most of its questions answered. The first effort in exercises like the following one is to have the students realize the importance of the ending to a narration and the functions it serves.

> Make an overhead transparency of a cartoon and cut out the final frame. Show the cartoon to the entire class and have them tell the story. Hopefully, they will get to the end and realize that something is missing. Instead of immediately asking them to supply the missing events, ask them what additional information they want (such as a conclusion, a statement, etc.). After a brief discussion, ask the class to make up an ending. Once they do this, the activity is complete, but often they want to compare their ending with the original, so you might want to show the final frame. If you do show the final frame, however, do not indicate that it is the "correct" conclusion, but rather just one ending. The same activity can be done with a narrative filmstrip or a short movie of a story by showing all but the last few frames or seconds and asking the class to provide an ending.

All of these activities should be followed by having the students write endings to other cartoons, filmstrips, or films. After they have written endings, they should share them with other students in small groups. If the class is mature enough, the teacher could have the students evaluate the endings. The criteria for judging should not be mechanical correctness, but whether or not the functions of an ending are fulfilled, such as giving a concluding event or answering questions raised earlier in the story.

At this point it would be worthwhile to review the entire process to date. Having begun with specific initial skills, worked through the development of a framework for a narrative, and then examined each

of the narratives, the composer should put it all together again before looking at some specific elements of narration. A review activity such as the following one is important so the students continually realize how the examination of the parts fits in with the whole process. They should always see where they are now in relation to where they have been and where they are going.

> Indicate to the class that this discussion will review all that has been covered so far in composing a narration. Take any two pictures which may provide a basic conflict for a story. Display them in front of the class and then lead the group through the component steps in constructing a narrative composition. Begin by asking the students to describe each of the pictures, both in terms of setting and action. List some of their ideas on the board. Then ask the class to describe the relationship between the two pictures, focusing attention on the possible conflict. At this point you should have enough to build the entire narration.
>
> Now develop the story by leading the class through the process with appropriate questions. For example, compose the basic skeleton by asking questions such as: *What happened ten minutes before the picture was taken? What is happening in the picture? What happened ten minutes after the picture was taken?* Record the students' responses on the board. Then go back and develop each section of the narration. First, compose the beginning with questions, such as: *Where is the story taking place? When does it happen? Who is involved?* Again list their ideas on the board. Now develop the middle of the story by asking what happened in the story and listing the events in order on the board. Finally, move to the conclusion with questions such as: *What happened at the end? Does this mean anything to anyone else besides these characters?* Again, list the comments on the board. Once all the ideas have been expressed and summarized on the board, have the students write their own versions of the story. They should be allowed to use ideas from the board, but they should not be restricted to that if they wish to follow another path.

With an activity such as this the teacher works through the process visually, verbally, and in print with the students, giving each an opportunity to understand what is going on through each of the three media. Then the teacher asks the students to work back through the discussion and demonstrate their understandings in

print. This feedback from the students should indicate to the teacher who needs more work in what area and at what level. Some of the students may have to be given another opportunity to demonstrate understanding by giving the teacher either a verbal or a visual narration of the same story. The problem may be that of translating the ideas from one medium to another rather than not being able to use the component steps. If the problem is one of transference, then the teacher's efforts should be directed toward helping the student make the transition from one medium to another instead of reviewing the initial concept again. If, on the other hand, it is lack of understanding, the instruction should be aimed at understanding the concept and then at transferring it from one medium to another.

For some classes instruction in narrative composition will terminate here. For others, however, it is important that the students learn how to work with narration in more depth so that they can compose more than just a superficial story. In order to reach this greater understanding of narration, at least a few major elements must be considered. The next section of this chapter concentrates on the development of character and the use of dialogue and figurative language in the narrative composition.

Narrative Elements

As with the discussion of other aspects of the narrative process, the focus here will primarily be on how these elements are demonstrated in various media and how the teacher can use these media, especially visuals, both to instruct and to motivate students. Again, the assumption behind most of the activities is that if students internalize the concept by working with it in a visual medium, they can more easily relate it to print than if they were forced to memorize the process only in print. Although the exercises are presented as independent activities, the teacher should reinforce use of the composing process by having students work through the process after each set of activities.

Characterization. Since students know more about themselves than they do about others, this would be a logical place to start with characterization. Sometimes, however, students are reluctant to talk

or write about themselves as it may reveal too much to the audience. As much as students claim to be honest and open with each other, there is still a deep need to preserve one's privacy. Many students live behind a mask of what they think is the ideal personality. Consequently, it is often difficult for these students to talk about themselves. When asked to do so, they become very self-conscious and sometimes defensive. What is needed is some way to enable them to look at themselves more objectively so that they can tap this wealth of information without becoming too self-conscious about it.

Pictures offer this possibility. An example will help illustrate this. Ann was a third grade student who had never written more than a few words at a time in school. In addition, she seldom participated in class discussions and when she did, it was with great reluctance and self-consciousness. Her teacher gave the following assignment to the class:

> I would like you all to go home and either get or take several photographs of your life outside of school. These may be pictures of your family, your neighborhood, your friends, or your home. Bring these pictures into class on Monday.

When Ann brought her pictures in, the teacher was pleasantly surprised. Ann had gone beyond the assignment and had put the pictures into a little booklet. On each page was a picture of one of her friends and underneath each picture she had written a very brief description of the picture. In addition to actually writing something for class, Ann also began to participate actively in class discussions.

I am not saying that this happens only with pictures or for every student who works with pictures. I am suggesting that sometimes a student is able to objectify and discuss personal thoughts when he or she can use a picture as a foil. In effect, the student is talking about the picture rather than about the self. Once the barrier is surpassed, the constructive activity often continues as long as it is received with encouragement. Exercises like the following one build on the belief that if a student can demonstrate feelings and ideas with visuals, he or she will be more willing to share with others.

> Have each student look through magazines for pictures which are self-describing. These pictures should reflect what the

student enjoys doing outside of school and the kind of person the student thinks he or she is (i.e., how the student thinks he or she appears to others). The student should also look for pictures which portray the kind of person he or she would like to be in the future, both in terms of occupation as well as personality. After each student has located and cut out these pictures, have the class make visual pillows (see Appendix) of themselves. On one side of the pillow the student should place those pictures which reflect the present and on the other side those which reflect the future. Although one logical follow-up to this activity is to have each student discuss their pillow with the class, I would suggest they do this only on a voluntary basis. On the other hand, it is important for them to share their creations with each other. One way to do this is to hang the pillows around the room, possibly from the ceiling or from lights, so that they can see their own and others' on display.

The teacher also can make a visual pillow and explain it to the class. This would not only motivate others to share their pillows but could also provide an opportunity to begin discussion of characterization, with the teacher using the pictures to share his or her own character description. In such a discussion the teacher should raise points such as selecting action or interesting pictures to describe specific aspects of the character. If interest permits, the teacher could also indicate that this is one of the ways a composer reveals character — through actions and through physical description of relevant features. After this discussion the class could locate pictures to describe characters other than themselves.

In exercises like those just described, the students work initially with visual media and then translate the idea by verbalizing what they have done visually. Once they feel comfortable with these media, the teacher should help them transfer what they see and say to print. The following activities demonstrate ways to accomplish this.

Have each student draw an imaginary animal. After drawing the animal, have the student write a description of the animal on a separate piece of paper. The students should not put their names on either the paper or the picture. After the descriptions have been written, post the pictures around the classroom. Collect all the descriptions and hand them out

randomly to the class, then ask each student to locate the picture the description fits.

In exercises like this the evaluation of the character description is realistic and prompt. The student knows a description has been successfully communicated to the audience if the reader locates the right picture. If not, there are some areas that need improvement. If the two students could discuss where the confusion arose in the composition, perhaps it can be alleviated.

The following activity brings the students together as a group to discuss the process of characterization and then asks them to practice the process individually.

Show a series of slides depicting different people. As each slide is shown, ask the class what the person is like. List their comments on the board or on an overhead transparency. When a student states what the person is like, ask for specific elements in the picture that give this idea (e.g., a wide smile might indicate a happy person while a deep frown might show the person as a grouch). Be sure to include some slides showing two people so that the class can also discuss how actions also help depict character. On another section of the board or transparency keep track of the ways character is portrayed in the slides. After the final slide, review the characteristics and the methods used to portray these characteristics (such as physical description, setting, actions toward other people, others' actions toward the character, etc.). Finally, show one or two more slides of characters and ask each student to describe one of the characters in writing, using some of the techniques discussed in class. In the written description, the student should not just say that the character is mean, but rather also should describe a situation or physical attributes that convey such an impression.

Dialogue Exercises like the two just given help the student describe the personality and physical attributes of a character. The next activity aims at helping the student get inside a character and describe feelings and perceptions from the character's point of view. This type of activity asks students to empathize with the character and imagine what they would feel like if they were in his shoes. For this reason it is often valuable to use pictures of people or situations with which the students can readily empathize.

Show slides of a person laughing, crying, getting angry, etc. Ask students to imagine they are the person in the picture and to describe what they feel like, what they see, hear, smell, and taste. Discuss the feelings and sensations with the class by emphasizing the feelings shown in the picture (citing evidence from the picture), and then move to feelings and sensations from the character's point of view. This activity could be followed up by showing the students another character slide and having them write a view of the world from the character's point of view.

Another way of treating the same concept involves having the students role-play the character in the slide. After the class discussion of the character, ask for volunteers to take the part of the character and act out an impromptu scene. While the volunteers are acting out the scene, other members of the class could take notes for a script. After the acting, have the actors work with the writers in small groups to perfect the script which depicts the character's personality. They could then put on a short skit based on this script.

Throughout the characterization discussions and activities, the teacher should demonstrate how a composer defines and clarifies the characters through physical description, action, and dialogue.

Dialogue. Scriptwriting is obviously a perfect introduction to writing dialogue. However, it may be too far removed from the story format for some students to see how dialogue operates within the framework of narration. One way to introduce narrative dialogue is with cartoons.

Make a transparency of a cartoon with the words in the balloons blocked out. As you show this transparency on the screen, ask the students to fill in the balloons with appropriate words. After the balloons have been filled in, ask the class why this dialogue is appropriate for this action. In a discussion of the relationship between dialogue and action, you may wish to demonstrate how words can either reinforce what the character is doing or can contradict the action, depending on the author's intention. This could be followed up by giving the students comic strips with the words omitted and ask them to work in small groups to supply the missing words.

In activities like these the actions of the people in the picture indicate what the dialogue is. The task for the students is to first read

the picture, determining what the dialogue should be according to the setting and descriptions of the characters, and second to imagine the appropriate dialogue. After the students have had an opportunity to work with dialogue by itself, they should practice putting it in context with the rest of the narration.

> Show slides of people in verbal situations, such as two people shouting at each other. As the class examines the various slides, have the students make up appropriate dialogue to be included in a written account of what is going on in the picture. After the class has had an opportunity to discuss the various ideas, have each student choose a slide or another picture and write a narrative about the scene including dialogue.

Scriptwriting is an excellent way to familiarize students with dialogue, as was demonstrated in a previous exercise. In addition, scriptwriting forms a good bridge between verbalization of an idea and the print translation of that idea. One way to encourage this activity is through role-playing and writing down the dialogue as it comes forth. Another way is to write a script for a film or filmstrip:

> Using a filmstrip which depicts two or more characters, have students assume the roles of the various people involved. Give the students time to create, write, and rehearse their lines. After they have prepared their lines, show the filmstrip to the class and have the actors give the dialogue for each frame. If the actors are too self-conscious to recite in front of the class, they could record the dialogue on tape to accompany the filmstrip. This activity may be extended by having the actors revise the dialogue and play it for another class.

This type of activity provides a fairly easy entrance into role-playing for those who are too self-conscious to actually perform in front of the class. First, it allows the very shy to use a tape recorder and thereby stay completely offstage. Second, the attention of the class is focused primarily on the screen, not on the actors. In this way the students can perform, but still remain in the background, a far less threatening position than totally in front of the class.

As students develop ability to use dialogue in scripts and in written narration, they will begin to see how dialogue can be used to help define a character, to explain or promote action, or to make an

insightful point to the audience. Since these are the important understandings, I would suggest that the teacher not be overly concerned with the punctuation of dialogue until the students have become secure in their understandings of the functions of dialogue in narration. The punctuation of dialogue is a mechanical act which should not interfere with the learning of the concept itself. If it is stressed too early, the student may become too wary of this aspect and decide not to use dialogue at all. The teacher should encourage use of dialogue first and then help the student learn the mechanical aspects later.

Figurative Language. Nearly all composition in which two ideas can be juxtaposed involves figurative language. Films, for example, use figurative language constantly as the filmmaker compares characters and actions with other things to define and clarify them through the analogy. For example, the technique of moving quickly from a picture of two lovers kissing to one of a fire roaring in the fireplace has become an overused visual metaphor comparing the passion of the lovers with the blazing heat of the fire. Indeed, the filmmaker often has a more difficult task than the writer because the audience is usually more familiar with visual metaphors than with print, having been exposed to them more often. Because we are so attuned to the visual medium and because the picture often leaves more of an impression on our minds, visual metaphors quickly become outdated. However, this medium does provide an excellent vehicle for the students' exploration of figurative language.

One way to involve students in narrative writing is to show them that our language can be fun if one is willing to experiment with it. In fact, such experimentation is important if the composer hopes to have a narration effectively portray a character or action. In addition to illustrating action and character by dialogue and description, the composer also defines them by comparisons, through figurative language. Homer, for example, compares Odysseus' driving the stake into the Cyclops' eye with

> "One who with an auger bores
> A great ship timber. Those below him
> Twist it by thongs on either side,
> And still it ever turns unceasing."

Not only is this a print metaphor, it is a vivid visual metaphor as well. The power of this analogy comes by the reader's visualizing the turning of the stake. In fact, some have argued that nearly all metaphors are primarily visual. If this is so, then the most appropriate place to initiate discussion of figurative language would be with visuals and comparisons between verbal idioms and visualization of these phrases.

Begin this activity very briefly by examining a few visually absurd phrases, e.g., *the teacher bit his head off*. First, have the class discuss the idiomatic meaning of the phrases, citing specific examples of when they have heard the phrase used. After the class has discussed the verbal or idiomatic meaning of the phrase, show them a picture of what it means literally. Now have the students find their own phrases or select ones from a list you have prepared, and visualize them either with mobiles, pictures, or drawings.

This exercise can be extended to include discussion and visualization of analogies in writing as well. In these exercises it would be valuable to discuss the reasons behind the analogy and the effect the composer is trying to have on the audience. For example, *In what way are someone's eyes as big as saucers? Why not boxes?*

Discussions in activities like the last should eventually bring out the idea that analogies are made only between specific aspects of objects, not between entire objects. These specific aspects have to be common to both items in the analogy, otherwise there is no point of comparison. The audience has to be able to visualize the relevant details of the comparison in context with the original item. This is true of all three media: visual, verbal, and print. If the audience cannot associate one item with the other with regard to some relevant detail, the comparison is absurd. For example, when a man is compared with a lion, the audience can associate the strength of the two and, therefore, see the analogy. On the other hand, when eyes are compared to boxes, the relevant details are either absent or so obscure that the audience will probably not comprehend the comparison. Students should learn to look for relevant details in analogies.

Select two pictures which can form an analogy, such as a man and a lion, and show them to the class. Begin the discussion,

for example, by saying, *He was like a lion.* Discuss various ways a man can be like a lion (picking out relevant details). Show two more pictures, keeping the orientation of the analogy the same (i.e., *the man on the left and the lion on the right*). Ask the students to state the analogy. Use another example, such as, *The house was a service station.* Discuss the ways a house can be like a service station, pointing out relevant details such as both provide fuel. (This example is purposely farfetched to encourage students to experiment freely.) After repeating the exercise a few times, ask the students to find visual examples of their own and have them show and discuss these analogies in small groups.

Visual analogies can also be demonstrated by showing one picture inside another. For example, draw a large picture of a heart. In the middle of the heart place a piece of white paper, about 12" by 15". On this white paper flash slides of other items, such as a roaring furnace or an ice cube. In effect, the visual metaphor is saying, *His heart was an ice cube.* With this demonstration the visual analogy is more direct than with the previous activity, but the ensuing discussions should be the same.

Working with visual media when teaching figurative language accomplishes more than one objective. First, it provides an opportunity to expand the students' imaginations, to help them actively search for analogies as they observe life around them. Second, using visuals makes experimenting with language fun, even for those who do not like print. Hopefully, this enjoyment and sense of experimentation will carry over to their writing. Third, it shows students that figurative language is not just the memorization of terms such as metaphor and simile, but rather it is at the core of vivid communication in all media. For this reason, I feel the terms themselves are unnecessary at this point. The teacher should introduce terms only after the students have become confident in the use of the concept. Otherwise, they may present an artificial obstacle to understanding the use of figurative language.

Review

The following are samples of activities a teacher can use to help the students review the narrative process. The first activity is an ongoing one which provides an opportunity for students to work on

their own to develop skills which continue to trouble them even after the class discussions and follow-up activities. The second exemplifies those which serve to give the students an opportunity to demonstrate their understandings of the narrative process.

> In a section of the classroom, such as an interest center, place a large number of pictures in a file box. For each picture have a series of questions pertaining to that picture and aimed at developing one skill. For example, on the back of a picture of a person you might have characterization questions, e.g., *What does this person look like? What is he doing? What might he be saying? What is his personality like?* For a picture depicting an action scene you might have plot questions, e.g., *What happened ten minutes before the picture was taken? What was happening when the picture was taken? What happened ten minutes after the picture was taken?*

An interest center such as this gives students the facilities and opportunities to reinforce those concepts the teacher has discussed in class. In addition to all those items mentioned in this and previous exercises for the interest center, such as tape recorder, boxes of still pictures, and story board, it should also have materials the students can use to make their own programs, such as extra slides, old magazines, scissors, tape, paste, and construction paper.

While the interest center allows for continuous review, the following activity is more structured in order to be sure that the students actually can tie all the learnings together in a concentrated review.

> After students have become familiar with the basic elements of a short narration (setting, plot, character), show a series of slides which encompass most of these elements. As each slide is shown, ask the students where they would use it in a story (i.e., what narrative element does the slide reflect?). There may be differences of opinion about many of the slides. This is good, as it is the discussion of the concept that is valuable, not a right answer. Select one slide from the series and develop it into a paragraph dealing with one aspect of the story, such as setting.
>
> On the next day give students a list of introductory sentences, such as, The first half of the day passed without incident. Show the slides from the previous day and ask students to match sentences with slides (e.g., a picture of a school

hallway with the sentence above). Have the students work in small groups discussing how they would develop this introductory sentence and slide.

Finally, the students could either develop their discussion story with the introductory slide and sentence into a written narration or they could make up a slide story. If some choose the latter, have them select ten slides from a random group of 15. After they select these slides, have them sequence the slides into a story line and write the narration for the story to accompany the slides.

The slide story is especially appropriate for students who have considerable difficulty with writing. Not only does it provide a review of the process, but it also gives them the opportunity to produce something which they can legitimately share with the rest of the class.

An alternative to this kind of review and demonstration of understandings would be to have the class keep the skeleton frameworks they constructed at the beginning of the instruction on narrative composition and continually develop the stories as they move through the process. This alternative has the advantage of constantly demonstrating where each of the elements fits in the overall narrative. Also, this gives the students a chance to immediately apply each exercise toward an overall goal as they can use the ideas discussed in the exercises to improve their basic stories.

Starters for the Teacher

Very often all a student needs to stimulate creative expression is a gentle push, an incentive to produce something. Once given the right stimulus and the right atmosphere, the students frequently surprise peers and teachers alike with their abilities — abilities which were always there but untapped. Several books and articles have cited innumerable ways to motivate students to write. However, I feel the most important ingredients in motivating students are a relaxed classroom mood and an enthusiastic, imaginative teacher. The following activities are by no means exhaustive. In fact, they are included especially for the teacher rather than the student. These

activities are meant only to stimulate the teacher to think of other activities for particular students. In this attempt, the activities do represent a range of visual approaches in addition to those already given that will hopefully spark the imagination of the teacher.

- Make a paper movie. At the beginning of this activity, conduct a discussion with the entire class and arrive at a theme for a class movie. If the class is too large, you may wish to use small groups (about five to a group). Once the theme is decided, discuss some possible scenes in this movie. Then have everyone in the group draw and color a picture representing the various scenes. Sequence the pictures and paste them on a long sheet of paper and make a roller movie (see Appendix). Once the movie is ready to roll, have students narrate each picture as part of the story.

- Have students make a filmstrip accompanied by a taped narration. After the filmstrip has been prepared (see Appendix), have students work in pairs to create a short story and draw it on the filmstrip using acetate pens. After they finish the drawing, have them record the story on tape. Then they can present it to the class.

- A variation of this would be to have the students make a slide-tape show by drawing on acetate and then cutting it to fit in slide frames. This activity has the advantage over the filmstrip in that the slides can be rearranged after production. A slide-tape show can also be created by having students select a few slides from a group; sequence them using an overhead projector as a viewing screen; narrate the story; and present it to the class.

- Have the students make string paintings (see Appendix) and color in the outlines to form images. Once the images have been created, have the students make up stories about those images. Some elementary school students have even written cinquains to accompany the string painting.

- This activity requires two classes, preferably at different schools. The teacher in the first class takes slides of individual students in the class. The slides should be of some action the student thinks is characteristic. Send the slides to the second class. The teacher in the second class then shows the slides to students and asks each student to write a description, biography (hypothetical, of course), or short story about one of the students depicted on a slide. The compositions are then returned

to the students in the first class. These students then reply to the individual writers in the second class via letters. The correspondence can be carried on indefinitely. Usually, a few students will keep it awhile, but most will probably stop after a few letters.

- Have students make three-dimensional creatures out of paper scraps, small objects, anything available for their use. Display the creatures on a bulletin board or table. Instead of asking them to describe what the creature looks like, have them make up a story about it, putting it into a complete narration.

- Have students make inkblots by creasing a piece of paper in the middle, dropping black ink or paint on one half, and folding it over and rubbing it to smear the ink or paint on both sides of the crease. After the ink or paint is dry, have the students describe what they imagine and create a story about it.

- Have each student take a piece of white paper and cut a hole in it. After the hole is cut, have students exchange papers with their neighbors. Now have each student draw and color a picture incorporating the hole in the final image. Then have the students write a story about the image they have created.

The activities operate on three basic assumptions not often observed by teachers. The first is that people need time to think while they are creating and composing. This contemplation time, however, should not be the amount of time granted by the assignment, Think it over tonight at home and be ready to work on it tomorrow. Most teachers realize that during this time very little mental effort is expended toward the composition by many students. On the other hand, the activities like those just described allow the composer opportunity to think about the creation and final composition while working on it, formulating the image.

The second assumption is that one of the most difficult steps in composing a narrative work is the first, the beginning. By first step I do not mean the stimulus itself. This is someone else's move, not the student's. The first real step is the one which the student takes, his or her reaction to the stimulus. This is the one that initiates commitment to the work. However, if it is perceived as a difficult one, the student may not take it. Consequently, the initial step in these activities is a very mechanical one, such as cutting a hole or dropping

some ink. This is one which the students can take easily, without too much mental strain or tension. The hope is that this small commitment to the work will serve as a spark which will kindle a small flame of imagination as the student fans it during the contemplation time.

Finally, all of the activities developing various composing skills are most effective when the student is given the opportunity to apply them immediately in a complete work. This application involves having the student follow the composing process: reacting to a stimulus, experimenting with ideas and words, writing a rough draft, sharing the draft with others, revising the draft, and submitting the final draft to the teacher for reaction.

CHAPTER 4

Exposition

"Write a short essay on grading." "Explain how to ride a snowmobile." "Write a composition about Ann Sexton's poem, 'Old.' " The majority of composition efforts revolve around topics like these. Each one calls for some kind of explanation of the composer's idea. In fact, except in a few English classes, the only kind of composition required of students in school is expository. Because many students do not know how to write in this mode, they are unable to demonstrate their understandings and, consequently, have difficulty in many of their classes.

Written composition, however, is not the only medium that allows for exposition. Most of our conversation, especially in academic settings, is also expository since we are usually attempting to explain our thoughts and defend our ideas. Some teachers assume this is a natural ability. It may be so outside of school, but in school it seems some students lose this natural ability to explain. It could be that these students just do not have enough information to say anything about the topic. On the other hand, in some cases it also could be that the students know what they want to say but just can't put it into words. Perhaps they should begin at a different composition level, with visuals. If they cannot put it into words, maybe they can "put it into pictures."

As in the preceding chapter, I strongly suggest that the teacher use a variety of media to help students explore the composing process. For each of the expository topics covered here, other texts

offer many excellent suggestions on using literature and print exercises to achieve the same ends, helping students better explain their thoughts to an audience. I believe a combination of approaches will benefit students better than any single one alone. The teacher should examine all avenues and present a smorgasbord of ideas to students so each may find the most suitable learning style. This smorgasbord, however, should not be haphazard; rather, it should be a sequenced series of explorations into the composition process with each step building on the preceding one. Within each step the teacher should sequence the exercises to allow students to work through the various instructional modes: sensory, verbal, and print.

Most of the exposition in English and language arts classes requires the student to take a position and defend it; explain how something is done; or analyze a piece of literature. For this reason I have limited discussion of exposition to the general expository pattern, the argumentative essay, the process essay, and the analytical essay.

Expository Pattern

The overall composing process for exposition parallels that outlined previously. First, the composer reacts to a stimulus, exploring the topic, free-associating or brainstorming to elicit many ramifications of the topic. Second, the composer experiments with words and ideas. Third, a rough draft is written, narrowing the topic to focus on those points which are the most important and which can be developed most fully. Some students have difficulty with this step because they feel they have to include everything in their essays, and, therefore, end up with a list of undeveloped, inconsequential ideas. During this stage the writer also arranges the points in a specific order, trying to establish some progression through the composition, and describes or provides support for each of these points. Fourth, the writer shares the work with someone else, examining the effectiveness of the argument or description. After sharing, the writer revises the composition on the basis of the suggestions. Finally, the writer submits the completed composition to the intended audience.

Show the class a picture and brainstorm all the ideas that come to mind. As the students call out their ideas, list them on the chalk board or overhead transparency. Once they are listed, ask the class which ideas can be the most fully developed. List these on another section of the board or transparency. Divide the class into small groups (from three to five per group) and ask each group to put the second list of ideas into a specific order. After the groups have done this (about five minutes), list each group's ordered list on the board and ask the respective groups to explain why they selected that particular order.

Now, have the students work in small groups again to provide support for each of the points. For this part of the activity you can either have each group list supporting ideas for each major idea, or you can divide the major ideas for only one idea apiece. After they have finished, have them share their lists with the whole class.

Once this stage is reached, the composer is ready to put the ideas into the exposition pattern. Generally, this pattern includes an introduction, a development, and a conclusion, which is comparable to the beginning, middle, and end discussed in "Narration."

Introduction. As in narrative composition, the function of the beginning of an exposition is to get the reader into it. The beginnings of both serve to interest the audience, provide necessary background information, and indicate what will probably develop throughout the rest of the composition. This applies to exposition in any medium. In a photo-essay, for example, the composer uses the first picture to catch the attention of the viewer and state a thesis. Because of the nature of the medium, a photo-essay usually arouses interest by showing a vivid example of the thesis. It may, however, also use some of the techniques used in written exposition, such as an allusion to something which the audience will accept as authority, such as a quotation; or even give a brief anecdote reflecting the thesis. Since the following activities are built upon the assumption that the two media are similar, we should examine the ways the two use these introductory techniques.

The first technique, providing a dramatic illustration of the thesis, is actually more appropriate for visual than print media. With visual exposition the composer accomplishes this directly, but with

print the image must be re-created in the reader's mind. One picture of the following situation would suffice to introduce the thesis that teaching is a difficult profession: "The students were all wandering around the room, paying little attention to the teacher. Books were cast haphazardly on the floor. The teacher tried in vain to reclaim attention."

The second technique, providing authority, is more often found in print than in visual expositions. All the writer does is quote from a respected source. The purpose of this technique may vary. Some may use a quotation or allusion to expand the meaning of the exposition. For example, a reference to Noah and the Great Flood immediately draws an analogy between what one has to say and the implications of the Great Flood. A visual exposition can also refer to more authoritative or universal statements. For example, in a visual essay on the financial crisis of the 1970's the composer may begin with a picture from the Great Depression showing the despair on Wall Street. In a photo-essay exploring the use of feminine wiles, the composer may begin with the classic visual depicting the mystery of woman, the Mona Lisa. Although the form is different, the technique is the same. Both media, in their own manner, allude to other statements to lend their essays authority.

The third technique, illustrating the thesis through a short anecdote, is sometimes used in both media, but more often in print. In some photo-essays, however, the composer may use the first few pictures to relate how an individual is affected by the financial crisis and then turn to the exposition on the crisis. All three of these techniques are often used to introduce expository compositions by (a) arousing interest in the topic and (b) stating the thesis of the essay.

> Show an action slide and ask the class to describe what they see. After most of the comments have been made, ask them for possible thesis statements (i.e., *What idea is the photographer trying to introduce?).* List these on the board. For each thesis statement ask the students what elements of the slide point to that specific thesis. Now ask the students to verbalize that introduction (e.g., "The town was completely destroyed. Houses were demolished; cars overturned; stores destroyed. Hurricanes can cause considerable damage to coastal towns."). Write these statements on

the board or transparency. Hopefully, the class will present a couple of ways of stating the introduction for the same thesis. If they do, have them select one to develop as a class. Put their choice on the board and work on it with the class, making it as graphic as possible and end it with the thesis statement. After this the class could repeat the activity, but this time in small groups. Once they have developed the introduction verbally, have them put it in writing and share it with the entire class.

This type of activity can be repeated for each type of introduction. For example, to demonstrate reference to authority you might use pictures of famous situations or classic photographs or paintings, such as "Migrant Mother" or "Mona Lisa."

Activities such as these involve several principles. First, they involve the whole class in discussion of the concept. Second, they lead the class through the concept step by step. Third, they give the students an opportunity to discuss and work with the concept in small groups, promoting more informal discussion from more students. Finally, they show students how they can apply the concept in different media, transferring their ideas from one to the other. The next activity demonstrates how the expository process is used by many outside of school, giving wider application of the process than just writing in school.

Select a magazine advertisement which uses a quotation, question, or anecdote to manipulate an audience and show it to the class. (See Appendix for photocopying.) Ask students to list details from the slide. Then have them translate the message of the slide into a paragraph incorporating both the lure (the quotation, question, or anecdote) and the thesis statement (buy the product and you will be happy).

In addition to arousing interest and stating the thesis, the expository introduction sometimes gives clues about how the composer will develop the thesis. In print expositions the structural clues often take the form of an ordered listing of the subtopics to be covered. In visual expositions such clues are more indirect in that the order may not be so evident. However, the important elements are often contained in the first picture. For example, if planning to compare two factions in an argument, such as police versus rioters,

the composer will probably include both in the initial picture and then deal with each faction throughout the rest of the essay. Students should learn how to provide clues for their audiences since these clues give the audience a preview of what follows and an indication of what to look for in each section of the essay. This orientation is important as it gives coherence to the overall work, putting each component in perspective for the audience.

> Place two pictures side by side and display them in front of the class. These pictures should reflect comparable items, such as a farmhouse and an office building. Ask the class in what ways are the items in the pictures alike. Then ask for differences. List the comments. This gives the class the raw ideas. Now have them edit and sequence the ideas. Then go back to the pictures and ask the class to verbalize what they see, including some of the ideas they would use to follow these pictures. As they verbalize this opening statement, write it on the board. Then, develop it with the class inserting structural clues where appropriate. A good follow-up to this activity would be to present two more pictures and ask the students to write an introductory paragraph based on them in small groups.

In sum, the introduction of the exposition serves several functions. First, it arouses sufficient interest in the audience so that they will continue with the rest of the composition. Second, it provides a thesis statement so that the audience is immediately aware of the topic of the exposition. Third, it may provide clues as to how the composer will develop this thesis so the audience can anticipate the overall structure of the composition. Once the stage is set, the composer is ready to develop the rest of the exposition.

Development. After introducing a topic, the composer then has to develop it, presenting arguments to prove the thesis, explaining a process, or analyzing a work. Obviously, the first step in this stage is to sequence the major points the composer plans to work with in the essay. If structural clues have been provided in the introduction, this step has already been taken. For each idea, moreover, the composer has to provide adequate support. Many students tend to leave the main ideas alone assuming that they are self-evident and acknowledged by all. They may be evident to the composer, but they are usually not so for the audience. Brainstorming activities such as

those presented earlier might help students find supporting ideas for the more general topics. During these activities, however, the teacher should be careful that the students do not just list parallel thoughts; but, instead, focus on ideas that are subordinate to the main ones.

Once information and supporting details have been gathered, the student is ready to put it into an appropriate form for an audience. Sometimes this step is taken for granted, but actually this is the heart of the composing process. Up to this point all the student has been gathering is raw data. Now the student has to compose it. Instead of just listing main and supporting ideas, the composer puts them into context, demonstrating the relationship among all of them. If the composer fails to do this, not only is the audience bored, but their understanding of the message is hampered. Without appropriate transitions and relationship clues, the audience is forced either to ignore the relationships or to construct their own. In either case the final perception of the message may not be what the composer intended. Consequently, the teacher should provide opportunities for students to examine main ideas for supporting details, look for relationships among the main and supporting ideas, and also use appropriate transitions and clues to convey these relationships to the audience.

> Construct a visual exposition comparing or contrasting two ideas, such as city life versus suburban life. In the first picture you should have elements of both ideas, such as a suburban village and a city skyline. Show the picture or slide to the class and discuss the kind of exposition this prepares the audience for and what the main ideas might be. Then show the rest of the visual exposition without comment. Repeat the showing asking students to verbalize ideas presented by the respective pictures. List some of the ideas on the board. Discuss the relationships among the pictures, concentrating on how you express the relationship verbally. For example, a student might say, "While the city has large buildings and wall to wall concrete, the village has no big buildings, but has rolling hills and forests." After you have discussed the slides, review the ways the students have indicated relationships, with words such as while, both, the one, the other. Ask the class to list other words they could use to tie the ideas together and record them on the board. After the class

has had an opportunity to discuss the exposition, ask them to write a composition based on the slides. Have them use the words on the board and the class discussion as they wish. A good follow-up would be to have students work in small groups to compose a visual essay, either with slides or as a filmstrip. After they complete the visual composition, they could either make a tape to accompany it or write captions for the individual pictures.

An activity such as this provides the student with an example of how one may proceed with an exposition comparing or contrasting two ideas. It provides a concrete example and a common experience to work from, and also offers input from other people for additional ideas. This type of activity also gives the students verbal tools, such as transitions, which they can use in their work. In constructing the initial visual essay, the teacher should not worry about making it too perfect. It is the discussion of the essay that is important; if there are some flaws in the comparison, perhaps more discussion will be generated. Finally, this kind of activity should give the student an opportunity to put the ideas discussed into practice immediately while the discussion is still fresh in mind.

Part of the purpose of the transitions is to provide movement throughout the composition. This movement should enable the audience to put the ideas into perspective with the surrounding ones. In order to allow this, the composer should continually review a little of what came before and indicate what will follow. In short, the composer should look back and move ahead.

Before students can express this movement in writing they have to be able to work with it conceptually. Often, teachers give additional print exercises to those students who have difficulty organizing their ideas into a logical pattern and then feel frustrated over a lack of improvement. Perhaps some of these students need to work on a different instructional level. Exercises such as the following allow individual students or entire classes to explore the concept or organization through the three media: visual, verbal, and print.

Take a series of pictures of the classroom, including people, activities, objects (e.g., chalk board, teacher's desk, door, ceiling,

lights, etc.). Have one group of students organize the pictures in order of importance (i.e., most important to them or to the teacher). Have a second group organize the pictures spatially (e.g., moving from left to right from where they are located). Have each group display the pictures; describe what their assignment was; and explain the relationship among the pictures. Now have the entire class discuss words they could use to move from one picture to the other. As the class calls out the words, list them on the board under either of two headings: importance or spatial. As a follow-up activity you could have the entire class take or locate pictures; organize them; discuss them in pairs or small groups; and then write an exposition based on that organizational pattern.

As the students begin to work with movement and transition within the composition, they should concentrate both on introductory and concluding transitions. Often, the writer anticipates the next paragraph with a clue in the final sentence of the preceding paragraph.

Using slides such as those used for demonstrating sequence in the second chapter, review the structure of the paragraph, emphasizing the movement within the paragraph from one picture to the next. After the students have completed the story, show the last slide and a related but different slide and ask questions such as, *Which is the better slide to end the story?* There will probably be disagreement, but ultimately you should be able to arrive at a compromise such as, Slide A is better to end the story completely, and slide B is better if we plan to continue with another paragraph because it introduces a new element.

I suggest working with an exercise in which the students have had some previous experience for two reasons. First, it demonstrates some continuity between the study of narration and the study of exposition. The processes are similar even though some of the techniques may vary. Second, it allows the students to concentrate on just the ending since they have already dealt with the story. This focus of attention is good because it allows students to understand one skill rather than struggling with several at once, which could be confusing.

Activities like these not only allow the student to practice the skill, but also give the teacher the opportunity to discover where the

student has a problem. Once this is known, the teacher can design additional exercises that lead from the student's area of success toward improving other areas. For example, if one can sequence well visually but has difficulty verbalizing these organizational patterns, exercises which allow use of the skill visually first and then verbally should help more than just additional print exercises.

Conclusion. The conclusion of the exposition should tie everything together. This is usually done either by restating the thesis or summarizing the main arguments. Although this is a fairly simple step, many students fail to take it and leave the audience hanging. Before practicing different ways of concluding the expository paragraph, it would be a good idea to demonstrate the need for an appropriate ending.

> Show an expository filmstrip, such as those often used in history classes; but stop it before the end. Ask the class if anything is missing. Hopefully, they will state that the filmstrip does not end, that they need more information or a summary. This could also be done with a slide presentation or with still pictures. Once the students realize something is missing, you could discuss the kinds of endings that would be appropriate for that exposition. After this brief discussion, ask the students to create various endings for the filmstrip. Discuss these conclusions both in terms of what types they represent, such as restatement of thesis or summary, and in terms of words used, e.g., in sum, finally, in conclusion.
>
> As a follow-up to the class discussion of the activity, the students could work in small groups with other filmstrips without endings, providing them with endings by drawing on the filmstrip (see Appendix) and giving written or spoken captions for a class presentation.

In sum, this expository pattern of introduction to arouse interest and to state the thesis, development to explain the main points, and conclusion to either restate the thesis or to summarize the main ideas, applies to most expositions. Within this pattern, however, are some variations, depending on the type of exposition required. The most common types are these three: argumentation, process, and analysis.

ARGUMENTATION

The purpose of the argumentative essay is to convince the audience of a particular point of view. As with other types of exposition, the argumentative essay can be broken down into three sections: the introduction, the development, and the conclusion. In the introduction the composer not only arouses the audience's interest and provides background for later arguments, but also states a position on the argument. Throughout the development of the essay, the composer provides support in defense of a position. In the conclusion, the composer usually restates this position, with some of the stronger arguments reiterated to provide a final thrust. A brief discussion of each follows.

Introduction. The main difference between the introduction in an argumentative essay and that in other expositions is the statement of thesis as a stand on an issue or as a particular point of view. As students work with this concept, they should not only practice taking different points of view on topics, but they should also learn how to demonstrate their points of view to their audiences. The first step in working with point of view is learning how to establish a point of view on a topic. It is a false assumption to believe that all students feel strongly about certain issues, such as dress codes or drugs. Although many might have opinions pro or con, many others either do not care about the issue or do not wish to commit themselves to one side or the other. Before we can expect students to develop an argument on a given topic, we should first help them learn how to take a stand.

> Show a slide of a controversy, such as a riot between police and rioters. Have the entire class discuss only what is happening, not why it is happening. Now divide the class into small groups and have each group take one side of the controversy, e.g., some could be police and others could be rioters. Have each group develop arguments to prove their side is right in the controversy. Have each group present its argument to the class. If other groups wish to get involved during the presentation, it may be more beneficial to let them argue, keeping note of some of the statements made. After the discussion, repeat some of the statements and discuss their validity with the class.

This kind of activity stresses looking at the issue from a particular point of view. The student should learn how to become

involved in the issue without feeling immediately concerned with it. This not only helps with developing an argumentative essay, but it might also help the composer understand other sides of issues. These activities could be followed up with individual work on issues and, eventually, by taking a stand on an issue with which one is very concerned. Throughout the discussion stages of these activities, the teacher should continually help students realize how the various points of view are indicated, first verbally and then in writing. This can be done by reviewing the discussions, repeating the main points and the ways students expressed themselves. After the verbal review, the teacher should show students how it might look in print. Then, the students should go through the process individually.

Development and Conclusion. The overall organization of the argumentative essay varies considerably, depending on the particular topic under consideration. After examining each of the main points for the essay, the student has to decide on the order of presentation. In some essays the student will elect to order ideas by level of importance. In others, however, an inductive or deductive approach may be elected. Students should practice both so that they can make a decision later on the basis of knowing which is more appropriate for their argument rather than because they only know one way to proceed.

> Have students locate or take pictures that (a) state the thesis of their argument and (b) support the argument. To work with the inductive approach, have them place the pictures in a sequence that provides many examples of the argument and culminates in the thesis statement. After they have sequenced the pictures, have them verbalize the exposition. Take one example or provide one of your own to discuss at length with the entire class. Discuss the individual pictures, the total sequence, the movement from beginning to end, and the transition words used to connect the pictures. Repeat the approach for the deductive method by having the students sequence the pictures beginning with the thesis statement and concluding with the examples.

Whichever organizational pattern was elected, the student should be sure to have a concluding statement which restates the position and major arguments. Usually, this takes the form of either

a restatement of the position or a summary of the major arguments supporting a position. If the students have each developed at least one visual essay, they should be able to locate a concluding picture. After they find these final pictures, the teacher should discuss the function of the conclusion by using a good example from the class or one from another source. Again, the teacher should verbally review the main points of the argumentative essay, illustrating them with one good visual essay.

After students have worked through the three stages of the argumentative essay visually and verbally, they should be able to translate one of their essays into print. When this is completed, they should share the written essays with peers to discover where their reasoning may be unclear or where they have not considered some other arguments. As with other compositions, the next step is to revise according to the sample comments from their peers and submit the essay for final evaluation by an audience. If some students have difficulty translating their visual and verbal essays into print, perhaps they should work on these and compose a finished essay at the visual-verbal level and work on the translation to print later. A good slide-tape presentation or film is at least as persuasive as a good written essay.

PROCESS

If students are having difficulty with sequencing, they may find it easier to begin with the process essay since the organization of ideas in this kind of exposition is usually very logical and natural. All one has to do is describe how something is done from beginning to end. Although this sounds simple, many students still have difficulty when asked to explain a process either in writing or verbally. They can perform the action easily, often without thinking about it very much; but, when they have to describe the procedure to someone else, they confuse the order. When trying to explain how to perform an act, one first has to visualize that act and then relive it. While reliving it, the student attempts to describe it to an audience. The difficulty is not with the original performance, but with the visualization of that performance. In accordance with a strong

premise of this book — that the teacher begin with the student's strengths and then use those strengths to improve weaker areas — I believe the place to start for these students is with the original act.

> Divide the class into small groups for this activity. Have each member of each group demonstrate a process for the other members of the group. This demonstration could be actual, if appropriate, or dramatized with or without props. As one student performs the act, the other members of the group take notes individually. At the end of each performance the viewers read their notices to the performer, who checks them for accuracy and completeness. Then the performer takes their notes and outlines the steps for performing that act.

For those students who have considerable difficulty recalling the steps in the process, the teacher could have them work in groups and either draw or take pictures to illustrate the explanation. This intermediate step accomplishes several goals. First, it helps the student practice visualizing the process by focusing attention directly on that stage. Second, it facilitates the writing or verbalizing of the process by giving the student pictures to use not only while translating the act into words, but also during the presentation to the audience. Third, this kind of presentation is usually well received by an audience and, consequently, the student legitimately experiences accomplishing something worthwhile in school. The student, then, has a secure base from which to operate at the next stage.

Once the students feel comfortable verbalizing and writing their process compositions, the teacher should help them improve by refining the beginning, development, and ending. As with all expositions, the beginning should immediately bait the audience into reading or listening to the rest of the composition. In the process composition, the student should also state the nature of the act and, possibly, why one might wish to perform it. The teacher can use many of the methods previously described to help the students with the beginning, such as using a slide of a completed model to introduce a process composition on building a model.

Although students have already worked on the steps involved in a specific process, they have not concentrated on transitions which help the audience move from one step to another. Many students use

these transitions easily; others, however, do not. For these students the teacher may find it helpful to examine transitions directly, listing the common ones on the board and discussing how they help the audience make the connections from one step to another.

> Divide the class in half. While one half turns away from the chalk board, the other half should watch you draw an abstract object on the board. After you finish drawing the object, have the observers copy it on paper. Then erase it from the board and have the class work in groups of three, each group having at least one observer and one nonobserver. The observer should describe how the object was drawn; the nonobserver should attempt to re-create it; and the third member should take accurate notes on what the observer says. After the verbal description, have the students in each group compare the two drawings and review the written notes, paying particular attention to the transitions used. Then, have each group share the process essay with the entire class. As each group reads its essay, list the transitions on the board. After all have shared their essays, review the transitions used and discuss alternatives.

The end of the process composition should reflect the finished act or state the importance of the act. Again, the teacher can initiate discussion by using a picture of the completed act, such as a model. Of course, the discussion would differ from the introductory one in that the phrases would summarize and conclude rather than motivate and introduce.

The process composition is valuable both for its focus on sequence, and for its direct application. Perhaps the most universal cry of the students is, How is this going to help me outside of the classroom? On a strictly practical level, the process composition has the most immediate relevance for students as they are constantly asked to explain how they perform an act to audiences outside of school. In addition, the process composition can be easily evaluated by others attempting to follow the directions given. Because of the immediacy and realism of the feedback, the student is more apt to catch errors than with most other modes of composition. This can be true, however, only if the teacher has the students move back and forth among sensory-performance, verbal, and print stages.

Literary Analysis

Perhaps the most neglected yet required exposition in English composition is the written analysis of prose and poetry. Many teachers ask students to respond to a literary work and then correct their response, instead of first giving the students an approach to responding. Often, when a teacher reads a student's paper and finds it incomprehensible, the teacher feels the student does not understand the literature. Actually, the student may have an understanding of the literature, but just cannot express the understanding in writing. Since this book is on composition, I will emphasize an approach to teaching the process of writing an analysis of a literary work. Because of the complexity of teaching literary techniques and interpreting those techniques, I will not attempt to deal with teaching literary appreciation in this text, but will focus on the communication of this appreciation in print.

The first step in a literary analysis is to briefly summarize what happened in the story, novel, or poem. This step is often neglected by students in their rush to get at the hidden meaning. However, as in other expositions, the audience needs some background information before dealing with the thesis. In this type of composition, the background information is what happened in the work. This summary of the plot should be superficial and objective, the purpose being just to give necessary information to the audience.

> Show the class a nonverbal film or slide show and ask them to state what happened in it. After they have verbalized it, ask each student to write it in one paragraph. After they have written their paragraphs, show the film or slides again and ask the students to compare what they wrote with what they saw the second time. Then they can revise and share their compositions with peers for feedback.

After students have had practice reporting events observed in visual presentations, they should attempt to translate their reporting skills to literary presentations, such as short stories. I suggest beginning with visual stories to focus attention on the process of writing a short report of the plot, rather than on the material itself. Since most students feel confident about their observations of visual presentations, they usually do not feel threatened when asked to

describe what happened in a film or slide show. However, when asked to do the same thing with a short story, many of these students panic and find they are unable to do the assignment. The teacher's task, then, is one of first showing the students how to write a short plot summary; second, giving them confidence in their abilities to write this kind of statement; and third, helping them translate both the knowledge and the confidence to literary works. In order to ease the transition from visual to print media, the literary examples should not be too difficult. The student should not be hindered by the additional barrier of a difficult work to analyze. While teaching the process of composing a literary analysis, the teacher should progress from the least difficult to the most abstract and should not even present extremely difficult works until the student has mastered the process. Otherwise, the student will be frustrated by the work and forsake the process. If this occurs, the teacher's goals for the student are defeated.

While some students omit the plot summary stage in their analyses, many others dwell on it too long. When teachers ask for an essay on what the author meant in the work, sometimes the students submit only a plot summary. They never move to the second level of analysis: stating what the author meant. One reason for this may be that the students do not realize the distinction between what happened and what the author meant. In order to help them understand the difference, the teacher should discuss the second level of analysis with the class and compare it directly with the first. While in the first level of analysis, the composer objectively reports what happened; in the second level, the composer discusses an interpretation of what the author might mean. Initially, this opinion is based on the reader's emotional and sensory reaction to the literary work. Often it is an interpretation of the author's tone or attitude toward what happened.

> Show a nonverbal film in which the filmmaker displays an obvious point of view. Before showing the film, ask the students to look for what happened in the film and their feelings about what happened. After the film have the class briefly report what happened. Then ask them how they felt about the action. After they give their answers, ask them if they think the author feels the same way. Discuss possible clues in the film indicating why

the author might feel this way, too. Write some of the better clues down on the board to be used later to develop this part of the analysis.

Once able to interpret the theme of a work, the student has to learn how to support an interpretation. As with most expositions, the composer has to support generalizations with evidence. In this case the evidence takes the form of examples and clues from the literary text. After forming the initial interpretation, the student should attempt to test it by applying it throughout the literary work. If the interpretation is correct, the events and statements in the work will support it. If it is incorrect, they will contradict it. However, most students find that some parts of the work support their interpretations while others contradict it. They have to learn to modify their theses so that all the pieces fit. Then, they are ready to defend their arguments by demonstrating how their interpretations can be applied throughout the work, citing specific, key examples as evidence.

In the concluding statements in a literary analysis, the student should reiterate the interpretation of the author's theme and, possibly, the worth of the work to the student as an individual. The opening of the conclusion is similar to that in other expositions. The closing of the conclusion, however, is different in that a new idea is introduced: the composer's opinion of the universality or worth of the work. It is at this point that the composer leaves the objective perch and passes judgment on the literary effort. It is important that the student realize the difference between interpretation of the work and evaluation of the work as it affects the individual. Liking or not liking a story should not interfere with reporting what happened or interpreting the author's point of view. This judgment should be reserved for the end and should be stated as a value judgment, rather than as an objective analysis of the work.

Instruction in these steps in writing a literary analysis can take many forms. One way would be to introduce each step and explore it individually and then pull them all into context at the end with a review of the entire process. A second way would be to use one work to stimulate verbalizing the ideas and follow it all the way through the process. The following activity can be used in either method.

Using a short narrative film, explore or review the entire process with the students. Show the film once, asking the students to note what happens in the narration. After this showing, ask them to report the events. As they give the report, write it on an overhead transparency. Refine this paragraph with the class and save it until later. Now, show the film again, asking students to note what the author meant. After the film ask for the various opinions. As the students give them, list the interpretations on the board. After you have a good number listed, ask the class to select the most promising for testing and possible development. Take these interpretations and ask the class to see if they fit in the film and, if they do, jot down supporting examples from the film. Show the film a third time. After this showing, ask students which interpretations fit best. This should eliminate all but two or three. Select one and develop it by supporting it with examples given by the class. As the class develops it verbally, write their comments on another overhead transparency. After they have finished their verbal development, refine the written development with them, concentrating on the supporting details in the analysis. Now ask them for a concluding paragraph, concentrating on the summarizing of the thesis or interpretation, or on the value of the theme of the work to the students.

As in the other explorations of the process of writing, the teacher should begin instruction with nonthreatening materials, such as films or some short stories. Using these materials the teacher can direct the students through the process by asking them to respond verbally and in writing to specific questions, for example, What happened? What did the author mean? What are examples from the work? Instruction in the process should begin with a full class exploration, perhaps with a short film. This would ensure that the experience is common to all the students. After demonstrating how students can work through the process, the teacher should have students work in small groups or pairs, practicing the process with ample opportunity for interaction during their work. Finally, each student should attempt to follow the process independently. After students are comfortable with the process of writing a literary analysis, they should be able to work with more sophisticated materials than those used to teach the process of writing the analysis. Then, they can concentrate on the techniques of analysis.

The activities presented throughout this text represent component skills in writing compositions. The effectiveness of the activity is determined by the amount of transfer the student is able to make from the exercise to writing a complete composition. Consequently, the teacher should have students incorporate the skill under consideration in a full composition as often as possible. During this incorporation students should follow the general composing process:

Reacting to a stimulus: verbalizing thoughts and feelings about a specific stimulus

Experimenting: trying new ways to translate these thoughts and feelings into print, playing with words

Writing a rough draft: putting the words into a total communication to someone else, concentrating on the ideas and style rather than the mechanics and neatness

Sharing with others: testing the effectiveness of the communication and exploring alternative methods of presentation

Revising the work: rewriting the composition, incorporating suggestions and ideas gleaned from the sharing experience

Submitting the composition: giving the finished product to the final audience for reaction.

CHAPTER 5

Grading

Usually, when we mark a student for composition, we have the student write several compositions over the course of the unit, grade each one, and assign an average of all the grades. This approach poses several problems. First, it confuses instruction with evaluation. While we are asking students to try new techniques and different ideas in their compositions, we are also telling them that they will be graded on the effectiveness of the composition. Although this may insure most will do the work, it will deter all but the most secure from experimenting. On the contrary, most will follow the "safe" road, using techniques and style they have found successful in the past.

Second, this approach to grading assumes that all the compositions are equal since an average can only be used when all numbers have the same value. Indeed, the opposite is the case. Some topics will interest some students more than others at different times. On some days, a student may not feel like writing and, consequently, may not put forth a maximum effort. In addition, the teacher may have a better attitude while grading one paper one time than another at a later time. All of these factors and many more invalidate the average since some B's are higher or lower than other B's depending on the time, conditions, and stimuli used.

Finally, the grading of each composition often detracts from the learning experience. When a teacher returns a paper with both a grade and a comment, the student usually looks at the grade and

gives cursory glances at the comment. In short, the student is influenced primarily by the grade, not by the detailed reaction of the teacher. Even more detrimental to learning is the subsequent inclination to write only to improve a grade, rather than to write a better composition. However, if we do not grade every composition, how can we mark students?

Ultimately, most teachers have to assign grades to students. One way to do this is to give three marks over the course of the composition unit: one for improvement, one for effort, and one for quality. Improvement should be based on a pre-post situation with the stimulus and directions being the same for each testing period. This may be a one-period writing assignment or, even better, a two-period assignment in which the student can write a rough draft during the first period and a final draft during the second. Even if it takes two days, it would be better to allow the student to follow the composing process voluntarily than to force the student to submit a first draft for evaluation. The pre-test should be given prior to instruction in composition and the post-test given at the end of instruction. To determine the grade for improvement, the teacher should examine each student's pre- and post-tests together. If the post-test is superior to the pre-test, the student has improved. If not, the student may not have improved.

Effort may be evaluated very easily by maintaining a folder for each student throughout the composition unit. Since all the student's work is contained in that folder, the effort is readily demonstrated. If the folder is empty, the student has put forth little effort. If it is full, the student should probably receive an A for effort, especially if all the work is of acceptable quality. Since papers are easily misplaced, I suggest the teacher keep the folder in school at all times and have the student place all work there when completed.

Quality is usually the most difficult area to evaluate. Often, teachers take the student's most recent composition and determine the student's ability on the basis of the quality of that work. This is not fair to all students. The last stimulus may have been fascinating to some and boring to others; some students may have been in the prime of health and enthusiasm while others were ill and disinterested. Rather, it would be more accurate to allow the student to

submit the best effort over the course of the unit as evidence of quality. In addition, I would give students the opportunity to revise their works once more before submission to be sure I had the very best they could offer.

Evaluation of quality poses an additional problem. What is quality? Sometimes, we confuse quality with neatness and mechanical correctness because it is easier to grade these aspects than some nebulous area like style. One way to examine quality is to establish the aspects of quality for each type of writing. These aspects or criteria should be developed with the students at the beginning of the unit. For example, when working with narration, the teacher could give the students a short story to read and then discuss the criteria they would use to evaluate it. Ultimately, the teacher should try to draw from them criteria such as interest, character, depiction, conflict or plot development, word choice, sentence structure, and usage. The criteria should reflect those aspects of narration which the teacher plans to examine most closely with the students during the unit. Once the criteria are specified, teacher and students can evaluate sample narrations written by others during the unit, rating them on the basis of these criteria. By the end of the unit, evaluation of quality should be easier for everyone concerned since all are familiar with criteria and procedure.

Once the teacher has all three grades (improvement, effort, and quality), the final mark should *not* be just an average of the three. Rather, the teacher should weigh the separate grades in respect to age and ability of the student and the purpose of the instruction. For example, with the insecure, seventh grade student, I would place greater value on improvement and effort than on quality; while for the confident writer at the same grade level, or a student in twelfth grade, I might place more emphasis on quality. The final mark should be a humane subjective evaluation of the individual student in relation to the purpose of the particular composition program.

Grading is necessary in our present system. If we refuse to grade students in composition at all, they will either value this work very little or they will be ultimately penalized as someone will probably ask for a grade. Grading on the basis of pre-post improvement, effort, and quality seems to be fair since it does give a reflection of the

student's ability and interest without turning each composition into a test, at best an anxiety-producing situation for all but the most successful and confident students.

With a humane evaluation system and a logical instructional procedure based on the composing process using a variety of media, teachers should be able to improve both the composing abilities of students as well as their attitudes toward writing. While not every student will actually enjoy writing, at least they should feel comfortable with the task and know how to produce their most effective communication.

Appendix

PRODUCTION HINTS:

Slides
Filmstrips
Visual Pillows
Overhead Transparencies
Roller Movie
String Paintings
Magnetic and Flannel Boards

Slides

Basically all you need to make slides is slide film, such as Kodachrome, Agfachrome, Ektachrome, etc. then take the picture just as you would with print film. This applies to 35mm single-lens-reflex (S.L.R.) cameras and instamatics.* However, a few suggestions about photocopying might be in order in case you wish to copy pictures from books, magazines, other pictures, etc., and project as slides.

Materials

1. Ideally, you should have a photocopying stand, photolamps, a 35mm (S.L.R.) camera, and slide film. If your lamps use tungsten

* A single-lens-reflex camera is one which allows you to view the object through the lens of the camera. You see what you get. The instamatic camera has a rangefinder. You view the object through an aperture different from the lens. The closer you get to the object, the greater the discrepancy between what you see and what you get.

light bulbs, like those in your home, you will need tungsten slide film, such as Kodak Ektachrome EHB.

2. If all you have is a 35mm S.L.R. camera, you can hold it in your hand and take the slide of the picture in natural light, providing the picture is not too small. Remember, the poorer the light and smaller the picture, the steadier the camera has to be.
3. If you do not have a 35mm S.L.R. camera, you can use the Kodak Ektagraphic Visualmaker, which is designed to make photocopying as easy as taking a picture with an instamatic camera. For information on this, see your local camera dealer or write Eastman Kodak, 343 State Street, Rochester, New York 14608.

Techniques

With stand, lamps, and 35mm S.L.R. camera:

1. Lay picture, book, magazine, etc. flat on the copy stand. If it will not lie flat, place a piece of clean window glass on top of it.
2. Attach camera to stand and adjust until picture is in focus. You may have to use extension tubes or a macro lens if the picture is too small. Extension tubes are rings which are placed between the lens and the camera. The larger the ring, the closer you can get to your object. A macro lens is a special close-up lens which enables you to take pictures of very small objects. With these attachments you can photocopy a postage stamp.
3. Adjust lighting. Lighting can be regulated several ways:
   (a) by adjusting the light source;
   (b) by adjusting the size of the lens opening (F-stop) — the lower the number (e.g., 2.8), the greater the opening, consequently the greater the amount of light; and
   (c) by regulating the shutter speed — the slower the speed, the greater the total amount of light. To determine the amount of light necessary, use either a light meter or the light meter in the camera, if there is one. When adjusting the photolamps, be sure to keep the angle of reflections less than 45°, otherwise you may have a glare in the slide.

   Note: Be sure to take the film speed (ASA) into account when adjusting lighting.

4. When you get your slides back from the processor, you might find that some of the pictures you copied do not fill the slide. You can overcome this by using one of the two following methods:
   (a) When you take the original copy, use four wide (4") strips of heavy black paper to provide black borders around the picture.
   (b) After you have the slide processed, take masking tape and put it over the unwanted areas of the slide.

5. If you wish to photocopy slides and you do not have access to a slide-copier, you can use a 35mm S.L.R. camera, a slide projector, and a screen. In this case, project the slide on the screen, adjust camera for focus and lighting, and take the copy.

   Note: Use tungsten film and a tripod or put the camera on a firm surface because you will probably have to shoot at a slow speed. You can also take pictures of films and TV programs the same way. This technique is particularly good if you wish to juxtapose two slides. In this instance use two projectors at the same time and then take the copy.

Filmstrips

There are two kinds of filmstrips you can make for classroom use: a) photocopied or direct pictures and b) hand-produced. In general, if you are interested in the first type, I would suggest you use slides instead.

Photocopied or direct pictures:

1. If you have a single-frame camera, just follow the procedures described under "Slides" and instruct the film processor *not* to mount the slides and to leave the roll intact. Just be sure the top of the picture is always at the right side of the camera. Most cameras, however, are double frame and will require a slightly more elaborate procedure.

2. If you have a 35mm S.L.R. camera, you will have to use a frame for the pictures so that you end up with two pictures per frame. After

you make the frame, follow the procedures outlined in "Slides" but use the frame and two pictures per copy. Instruct the film processor *not* to mount the slides and to leave the roll intact.

Note: Be sure to sequence all your pictures before shooting. You cannot change the sequence afterwards. Also, take special care with the orientation of the pictures within the frame (top and bottom). You probably do not want any to appear sideways in the middle of a presentation.*

Hand-produced:

This procedure is very easy, but also time-consuming. You can buy kits for producing filmstrips by hand, but sometimes the cost is prohibitive.

A very inexpensive alternative is to use an outdated or ineffective commercial filmstrip; bleach it and write or draw on it using acetate pens, acrylic paint, or India ink. The steps are as follows:

1. Take the commercial filmstrip and mark off the frames on a piece of white paper.
2. Put the strip in a jar with about 1" to 2" of bleach; cover; and shake until the strip looks clean.
3. Rinse emulsion and bleach off. If strip is not clear, repeat process (you can probably reuse the bleach).
4. Tape the white paper with frames marked on it on a working table. Tape the filmstrip over it so you can see where the frames are.
5. Using acetate or similar pens, draw your pictures or write your words on the filmstrip. Be careful with the orientation.

   Note: Try to fill each frame since the projected image will show a lot of white, otherwise. You can even provide a color background by coloring the other side of the strip if you wish.

* A good source for more complete detail for both slides and filmstrips is *Producing Slides and Filmstrips*, Eastman Kodak.

Visual Pillows

Although these may seem very "gimmicky," they often do motivate student work and they do offer an extra dimension not available with the other visuals.

Materials:

Clear contact paper, scissors, straw, and pieces of paper, such as pictures, poems, compositions, etc.

Procedure:

1. Take two equal-sized pieces of paper.
2. Lay one piece of paper on the clear contact paper and measure for cutting. Allow at least a one-inch border around the piece of paper.
3. Using this measurement, cut two pieces of contact paper.
4. Peel backing off contact paper and lay contact paper sticky side up on table.
5. Place one piece of paper (picture side down) in middle of contact paper.
6. Place straw on one corner of contact paper so that the straw extends over the piece of paper and over the table.
7. Repeat process (except for straw) with other sheet of contact paper.
8. Place second sheet of contact paper directly on top of first so that both sticky sides touch.
9. Make the contact firm all around the pieces of paper except where the straw protrudes.
10. Holding the "pillow" on both sides of the straw, blow into straw until the "piliow" is completely blown up. (You might even want a little extra to compensate for loss when straw is removed.)
11. Quickly pull straw out and seal the hole. Pillow can be blown up again by peeling contact paper apart and reinserting straw.

Overhead Transparencies

There are many ways of producing overhead transparencies varying from using acetate pens or grease pencils and marking them directly by hand, to using the diazo process or a copying machine. All of these methods have been fully described in many good audiovisual textbooks. The "lift" process, however, has not. Although this method does not produce the professional results of the diazo method or the clean copy of the other methods, it is one which students can do safely in the classroom and end up with interesting color transparencies of magazine pictures (providing the magazine picture was in color originally).

1. Locate and cut out pictures which you wish to use to make transparencies.
2. Take a piece of clear contact paper, lay it on top of the picture, and rub it to make sure the picture is firmly stuck to it. Try to rub out any air bubbles.
3. Place contact paper and picture in warm water and let soak for a few minutes. (Sometimes a small amount of detergent can be added to help loosen the paper.)
4. After the paper seems loose, peel it off of the contact paper. (Make sure all the paper is off.)
5. Place a piece of acetate (plastic) on the sticky side of the contact paper. (You can also rinse the contact paper to remove the stickiness.)
6. Project on screen.

Roller Movie

Students can build a roller movie to show a sequence of ideas, either expository or narrative. Not only will this help them demonstrate their ideas in an enjoyable manner, but the very process of creating the roller movie will help them with following directions, teamwork, etc.

Materials:

Cardboard box longer and wider than the paper used, two long rollers (such as dowels) about four inches longer than box is wide, strips of paper that can be drawn on.

Procedure:

1. Draw ideas on the paper; sequence them; and attach so that all the pictures can be viewed sequentially as one long strip with the first picture on top. Attach title and credit pictures and a few blank papers on both ends.
2. Cut rectangular hole in the bottom of the box. The hole should be large enough for each picture, but small enough so only one picture can be seen at a time.
3. Insert rollers through the sides of the box: one above and one below the hole so that their ends extend beyond the box.
4. Wind strip of pictures on bottom roller so the first pictures roll on last.
5. Attach the top of the picture strip to the top roller.
6. Roll movie either with narration or captions.

String Painting

Although usually found in the art class, string painting allows students to let their imaginations roam and motivates them to envision ideas in new ways.

Materials:

Tempera paint (especially black), thick string (enough so each participant can have at least 12 inches), construction paper (usually white), paper towels (to wipe paint off hands, tables, etc.), crayons.

Procedure:

1. Have students work in pairs. Give each pair access to paint, two strings, two pieces of construction paper, towels, and crayons.

2. Take one piece of construction paper and crease it in the middle; leave open on table.
3. Dip string into paint and wipe off with fingers as you pull it out of the paint.
4. Lay the string on one side of the creased construction paper, hanging end of string over the side.
5. Have partner fold paper over the string and while partner holds it gently but firmly, pull string out with a steady motion.
6. Open paper and let dry.
7. Color the outline to form a picture.

Magnetic and Flannel Boards

Both of these are easy to make and enable students to manipulate figures and pictures easily. In addition, they allow students to create their own images for the manipulation.

MAGNETIC BOARD

Materials:

1. One piece magnetic paperboard, a special paper to which magnets will stick. A 30″ by 40″ piece can be obtained from graphic arts supply stores for about $3.00. This piece can then be cut into smaller ones for your use.
2. Magnetic tape with adhesive on one side. Three two-foot strips one inch wide are available for about $2.00. These strips can also be cut.
3. A mounting board might be needed; an old piece of plywood will serve.
4. Small pictures, such as cartoon characters from Sunday comics.

Procedure:

1. Cut the paper to mount on the board. For small group work, a 12″ by 12″ piece might be large enough.

2. Cut out pictures to place on magnetic strip. These pictures can be from comics, magazines, self-drawn, etc.
3. Cut pieces of magnetic strip to fit the pictures.
4. Peel backing off strip and stick pictures on it.
5. Put pictures on magnetic board.

Note: You can also color a scene on the board directly to provide a background for the pictures.

FLANNEL BOARD

Materials:

1. Mounting board, such as that used for magnetic board, about 24" by 30", tacks.
2. Piece of cotton flannel or felt about 30" by 34".
3. Materials such as felt, flannel, and sandpaper.
4. Pictures, glue, scissors.

Procedure:

1. Fold the flannel over one side of mounting board — about two inches — and tack.
2. Stretch the flannel across the board; fold over other side; and tack.
3. Repeat for top and bottom.
4. Students can cut figures out of other pieces of flannel or felt or they can cut pictures out of magazines, etc., and paste them on sandpaper. These will adhere to the flannel and can then be manipulated by the students.

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